

FAITH AND FREEDOM



30259

A JOURNAL OF
PROGRESSIVE RELIGION

Volume 11

SUMMER

Number

Part 3

1958

33

FAITH AND FREEDOM

A JOURNAL OF PROGRESSIVE RELIGION

Editor: E. SHIRVELL PRICE, M.A.

Assistant Editor: A. K. ROSS, B.C.L., M.A.

Associate Editor: JAMES L. ADAMS, Ph.D.

VOL. 11, PART 3

SUMMER 1958

NUMBER 33

| | |
|---|-----|
| EDITORIAL: Our Doctrine of Man | 97 |
| Copy of Letter from John H. Dietrich to J. S. Loughran | 98 |
| Universalist Call for a New Doctrine of Man .. | 99 |
| EXISTENTIALISM AND THE LIBERAL OPPORTUNITY | |
| TOM WARDLE | 102 |
| THE IDEA OF GOD IN MAN | |
| J. FORD LEWIS, PH.D. | 110 |
| A GUESS ON IMMORTALITY | |
| STAUNTON CALVERT | 115 |
| UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY AND A CHRISTIAN UNITARIANISM | |
| PROFESSOR GEORGE HUNTSTON WILLIAMS | 119 |
| TOWARDS A UNITARIAN THEOLOGY | |
| BRUCE FINDLOW, B.A. | 128 |
| RELIGION AND NEUROSIS | |
| H. FABER, D.D. | 138 |



LAUNCHED AT THE INSTANCE OF THE OLD
STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF MANCHESTER
COLLEGE, OXFORD, WITH THE FINANCIAL
SUPPORT OF THE DR. DANIEL JONES TRUST
PUBLISHED AT
MANCHESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD, ENGLAND

Editorial and Subscriptions at 13 Shrewsbury Road, Bolton, Lancs.

*Sterling Area Annual Subscription 7/6. Single Copies 2/6,
by post 2/10. Remit to Editor at above address.*

Dollar Area Annual Subscription \$1.50 Single Copies 50c

*U.S.A. Remit to R. RAIBLE, 4015, Normandy, Dallas,
5, Texas, U.S.A.*

*Canada. Remit to R. McDONALD, 456 Argyle Avenue,
Westmount, P.Q., Canada.*

Editorial Our Doctrine of Man

UNITARIANISM, and the Liberal Religious Movement generally should come to a fuller awareness of the impregnable position it occupies by its reasoned insistence that a man's religion is his whole way of life, based upon his own experience of love, truth and beauty, and what he finds adorable or worshipful in life. This is the Religion of the Inward Revelation.

There are yet too many liberals who fail to recognise the fundamentally positive nature of their faith and who defer to orthodoxy by defining their faith as a rejection of the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, the Bodily Resurrection, or the Atonement; and the resulting definition is inevitably a catalogue of disbeliefs rather than of beliefs. The deeper and wider reasons for rejection are rarely recognised. Unitarians alone have a double reason for rejecting such dogmas: first because they are dogmatically imposed by an ecclesiastical authority which claims infallibility in its deductions from an assumed final revelation, and secondly because they are just not true to historical evidence, reason, conscience or experience.

It is not our negations, but what we roundly affirm that gives our faith its second distinctive characteristic as the Religion of the Larger Affirmation, besides which the affirmations of orthodoxy are often but limited and limiting half-truths.

Even so, we are not so much concerned about the rightness of our theological criticisms, for such concern leads to dogmatism, and we know that men dogmatise only when they cannot substantiate their views by reason and evidence. But we are concerned about the affirmations which arise from the living roots of our faith, which give quality and character to our lives, and which can be lived out. We have in mind, above all, our Faith in Man, or such a recent variant as Schweitzer's Reverence for Life.

Our patent lack is for a theology based upon our affirmations. There has been no generally attested development since Martineau affirmed the primacy of the enlightened individual conscience as the seat of authority in Religion. It has taken the attacks of neo-orthodoxy from without, and of Humanism from within our ranks to bring us to the realisation that we have no adequate Doctrine of Man to counter the reactionary theology of orthodoxy on the one hand, or totalitarian political ideology on the other. This is one major conclusion to be drawn from our previous discussion of the humanist-theist controversy. Humanists have really been crying out for an adequate Doctrine of Man, whilst the theists have been saying "Why aren't you satisfied with our Doctrine of God?" And the humanists have replied "We don't know what you mean by God unless you can show us first your Doctrine of Man," which is the position in which we now are.

The requisite Doctrine of Man could well continue to be the main concern of this journal for years to come. It would call for corporate thinking as well as the thought of the best minds in our movement. It should develop in consonance with the tested ethical and psychological insights into human nature and with the findings of modern biology, anthropology and kindred sciences. It should become a basic study in every seminary which is training men for the Ministry of Religion in Liberal Churches. The name we suggest for this, our major liberal study, is Humanology.

From a Doctrine of Man there would naturally follow a Doctrine of Spiritual Reality, which would include a Doctrine of Revelation true to the Unitarian insight that revelation is spontaneous and from within, and not coercively imposed from without; and that the transcendent 'Holy' is also within and not without.

In any case, the genius of Unitarian Religion should always require that we start from the known, or relatively known, and proceed to the relatively unknown, and not *vice versa*, as in traditional theology. We submit that what one can affirm meaningfully about God depends on what one affirms about Man, and what one affirms about Man depends upon what values one affirms in one's own life.

The pages of this Journal during the post-war years have borne ample witness to a widely felt need for rethinking our theology from our own basic witness and not from that of orthodoxy. Nothing could point the issue more poignantly than the letter which follows, from John H. Dietrich, the 'father of religious humanism', written some year before his death. His life was a valiant testimony to the Spirit of Man, and by living true to his insight he has helped mightily to renew the vitality of the Religion of the Larger Affirmation.

COPY OF A LETTER FROM JOHN H. DIETRICH

Dear Mr. Loughran,

Berkeley, Calif.,
May 15, 1956.

My activities are very restricted because of illness, so that I am not able at this time to give you an adequate reply to your questions in your letter of yesterday, but I do want you to know that the pamphlet on "Humanism" to which you refer does not any longer express my philosophy, in fact I no longer call myself a Humanist. Perhaps I can give you some idea of my position in a few words.

The fact is that my philosophy and religion have undergone considerable, if not drastic revision. I realize now how my utter reliance upon science and reason and my contempt for any intuitive insights and intangible values which are the very essence of art and religion, was a great mistake; and the way in which I cut mankind off from all relationship, denying or ignoring every influence outside of humanity itself was very short-sighted and arrogant. I have come now to believe that we cannot ignore "the power behind phenomena," or God, if you please. I still hesitate to use the latter term because of the crude connotation which it suggests to most

people; but much reading and mature reflection have convinced me of the reality of a spiritual power in the universe. I would hesitate to define it or even explain its workings, but I believe that by meditation we can experience its presence, bring ourselves into harmony with it, and find our lives enriched and energized. The world today needs above all else the ethical fibre and spiritual integrity, which science cannot and does not pretend to furnish, but which religion can furnish. I mean real religion, not orthodox theology or organized ecclesiasticism.

I mean the kind of religion which arises from the consciousness of being a product and part of an all-powerful and all-penetrating force—God, nature, creative force—call it what you will, which is the dynamic of the whole universe, and which amid all the ups and downs of evolution and human history seems to drive toward improvement in every form, although frustrated by human ignorance and arrogance. Religion should seek to make people conscious of the fact that in every moment of their existence their lives are nourished, animated and urged toward better things by the inescapable presence of this all-enveloping power. We should seek to develop this contact, making it more intimate and thus more effective, for it is this intimate contact which flowers into what we call the spiritual life, and in which the world today is so sadly lacking.

I probably have not said enough to make my position clear, but I want you to know that my philosophy has undergone a change. I think Humanism had a value as a protest movement with an emphasis upon human betterment, but its day has passed, and should be replaced by a more mature attitude toward the universe and human existence. Sincerely yours,

(Signed) JOHN H. DIETRICH.

This transcript is attested by the Rev. Joseph S. Loughran, now of Redwood City, California, a Congregationalist, affiliated with the Unitarian Fellowship.—Ed.

UNIVERSALIST CALL FOR A NEW DOCTRINE OF MAN

"The Universalists can do nothing until someone arises to give them a philosophy. They must comprehend their instincts, before they can give to their doctrine of reconciliation that character which will adapt it to the wants of entire Humanity."—ORESTES A. BROWNSON.

We of the liberal fold are at a point where we must re-examine many of our views. With the bombardment of our fortress by the neo-orthodox, the neo-conservative, the neo-classicist and others, we have good and sufficient reasons to re-evaluate, recognising the force of some of their criticisms. In a word, we need a neo-liberalism.

It is of more than a little interest to note that in the official statements of the Universalist Church between 1790 and 1935 no mention was made of the nature of the human creature. The stated theological concerns were with Scripture, the Supreme Being, the

Mediator, the Holy Ghost and Good Works. Not until 1935 did our Church Fathers allude to the Nature of Man. In 1935 we caught up with a century-old romantic view: Man can overcome *all* evil; Man can progressively establish God's kingdom. The presumption that Man *can* overcome all evil is in itself a form of weakness. We overlooked this weakness inasmuch as we blandly accepted romantic notions about Man. We made our first explicit statement as Universalists when we wrote, "We avow our faith in the supreme worth of every human personality, and in the power of men of good will and sacrificial spirit to overcome all evil and progressively to establish the Kingdom of God." This is briefly explicit. A good deal is implicit. There are assumptions and unfortunate implications which have proved to be the bane of our existence.

For example, as professional exponents of the going concern of Universalism, ministers have not treated the subject of Man's nature with courage or insight. As a consequence, the mantle of the honest critic has fallen from our shoulders. The *literati* and the analysts have become the prophets and definers. While we in our "liberal" pulpits have sounded forth our honeysuckled words, representative Men of Letters have said profound things about Man. Consider what Theodore Dreiser said about Man in *The American Tragedy*; what Sherwood Anderson was saying when, in his novels, he penetrated the hidden life that throbs behind the mask of politeness and culture; what Nathaniel Hawthorne was saying about our romantic view when he criticized the hypocrisy of a Unitarian minister in the person of Arthur Dimmesdale. While in the pulpits we were preaching our over-optimistic view of the human creature, Herman Melville was expounding the thesis that there is the demonic and diabolic in Man. Even today, while we yet advocate our 19th-century notions, Kafka, Camus, Sartre, Thomas Mann, D. H. Lawrence, Faulkner, Hemingway and others are being read whose views of Man in his wholeness are seen to be more accurate than ours. Also, while we have talked on blithely for two centuries about the goodness and perfectibility of the human personality, Sigmund Freud has been writing: "Man, not being simple, is not simply good. He has a kind of hell within him from which rise everlastingly the impulses which threaten his civilization."

The neo-liberal view will do well to build its understanding of Man, his nature and possibilities, upon the definition of the novelist and the analyst instead of the romanticism of a Robert Browning. Man may not then be the wholesome hero we prize, if we see him with Dostoevskian eyes. Man isn't what we as liberals see, anyway. Lionel Trilling, himself a liberal, has written in *The Liberal Imagination* "When we think of the simple humanitarian optimism which, for two decades, has been so pervasive, we must see that not only has it been politically and philosophically inadequate, but also that it implies, by the smallness of its views of the varieties of human personality, a kind of check on the creative faculties."

Shall we then say that we are all "sinners"? We do not need to make this concession, adopting the vocabulary of the neo-Calvinists. As neo-liberals, we might consider adopting many of the statements of the existentialists concerning the human situation. A European liberal, L. J. Van Holk, explaining the meaning of existentialism, says of himself, "I feel that many decisions in my life have not been made on the basis of reason but on the basis of desire, prejudice, emotion, and that this emotional element in life really constitutes our secret blessedness." He adds, "To pretend that man is a good and a nice fellow is really overstating the case!" (*Faith and Freedom*, Vol. 10, 1957, pp. 122-3). A readiness to accept the whole man, however unpleasant, must mark the new liberal.

Neo-liberals in the pulpits, while calling attention dramatically to the courage and faith of a crucified peasant from Nazareth, will consider balancing this picture against the insensate mob—giving proper weight to man's cruelty and ignorance and wilfulness. We cannot build our understanding of the new Man upon a romantic view of the Nazarean, leaving out of the picture Peter and Judas and their betrayal. To attempt to do this would mean that, even we who are persuaded by the optimistic view and who have cultivated a "loving" attitude, are but self-deceivers. The neo-liberal view will be more honest. It will preach Man, seeing him in his degradation and guilt as well as with hope and compassion. We will see Man, not so much the sinner as the tragic figure, stretched and tensed between ideal and actual, time and eternity. Man will not be the liberal preacher's darling. He will be seen as an approximation of the three brothers in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Mitya, Ivan and Alyosha; as Camus' Monsieur Meursault of *The Stranger*; as Sieglinde and Siegmund of Mann's *The Blood of the Walsungs*; as Willy Loman, the salesman, and as Arthur Dimmesdale, the "liberal" clergyman.

We have so tempered our people to see the bright and shiny side of life that our parishioners prefer to move over into the Norman Vincent Peale pews if we, knowing ourselves and others, start talking dourly of the Man we know. We hardly dare quote Freud or Adler as authorities. With fear and trembling we delineate some fragment of the wilful creatures before us. If we want to talk about courage, for example, there is no sense in talking of courage unless victory is seen, white against the blackness of alternative possibilities.

Neo-liberalism will speak with a new power; because we shall retain the faith that life can be meaningful, though we seem to face meaninglessness; because we keep the faith that Man is of supreme worth in spite of evidence to the contrary; that God is, and is loving toward us, though we are in travail with our doubt and despair; that we *can* conquer some of the evil in ourselves, and we *can* rise above the tragedy, the horror, the sickness and the despair.

Haverhill, Mass.

THEODORE A. WEBB.

Existentialism and the Liberal Opportunity

TOM WARDLE

THERE are two main philosophic attitudes dominating the minds of men in the western world. The first is the attitude represented by the logical philosophers who are concerned only with the "facts" of the universe and reject the inner experience of man as logically unreliable and of no scientific value. For them the problem of the meaning of life is not a real problem, and no amount of thinking on it can produce any solutions; the only philosophically sensible position for the logical philosopher, therefore, is atheism. If a man wants to adopt a religious belief, there might be nothing in their view to deter him, so long as he does not claim that such a belief can be arrived at, or supported, logically. Most logical philosophers who do subscribe to religious beliefs, do so, not on grounds of reason but on grounds of authority, tradition, or no grounds at all.

The other dominating philosophic position is that of existentialism. At first sight this appears to be the exact opposite of logical philosophy. The Existentialist insists that there can be no conclusive knowledge of the universe, even by the most exacting scientific analyses. The only fact a man can know is the fact of his own being. Furthermore, it is not with *knowledge of the facts* that he is concerned, even with the fact of his own being; it is with their meaning. Things and events in the "outside world" derive their meaning for the existentialist not from what they are in themselves (for there can be no certain knowledge of that), but from how they affect his being. Whether the universe exists apart from my consciousness of it or not, it is my consciousness of it, my existence, which makes it meaningful in the only sense in which I can understand it as meaningful, that is, meaningful to *me*.

It is sometimes argued, not without reason, that these two positions are nothing more than re-statements of the two immemorial philosophic positions of realism and idealism, of Aristotle and Plato, of objective and subjective philosophy. Re-statements they certainly are, but hardly "nothing more." What may be scientifically asserted about the world is now very much more clear-cut than ever before. Logical and mathematical error has been eliminated over large areas of scientific practice. A good deal remains to be done even within the limits of "everyday" sciences, but the important thing is that the *method* for eliminating error and refining exactness is already established. One of the new fields for research and improvement is the field of human language. The language scientists (linguistic analysts) are in effect seeking to define scientifically the limits of meaning of words so that their use may become exact and unambiguous, as with mathematical symbols.

Similarly, with existentialism, there are important developments which mark it off from traditional idealist philosophy; the refusal to make assertions about the world; the rejection of the speculative method, and preoccupation with suffering and futility.

Unitarianism contains within its tradition two elements which correspond to these two modern philosophies; the first is rationalism, the second is mysticism or intuitionism. Since the middle of the nineteenth century Unitarians have been saying that they welcomed the discoveries of scientists. Their reason for saying this was, so they held, that further scientific discoveries could not help but confirm their own conception of the universe and God. In this there was an inconsistency. Science, by its very method, does not pre-judge its discoveries. It was therefore unscientific of Unitarians to say that further discoveries would necessarily confirm their views; there could be no way of knowing till the discoveries were made. They might have said that Unitarians should welcome the further discoveries of scientists even if such discoveries undermined their philosophy of religion; but this would have been unthinkable, so they did not. It is true that some whose approach to reality was mystical, asserted that the truths of religion were not of a scientific order, and thus whatever was discovered or not discovered would make no difference to the life of faith; yet theirs has not been the dominant voice in the last eighty years.

That this attitude still persists is shown not only in the general theological expression of the Movement, but also in its most admirable and comprehensive collective statement to date—*A Free Religious Faith* (Lindsey Press, London, 1945). This document is far too little discussed, and inadequately appreciated by the Movement as a whole. I use it as the basis of my comments on present-day Unitarian thought.

A sentence from the Summary Report may not unfairly be used to represent the attitude of Unitarians to scientific discovery. It reads: "The world explained by scientists is a world of order, a world of mind, a world of reason." (p. 13)

This statement, which seems to me to be a key statement, would be keenly attacked by scientific philosophers today. Their first charge would be that scientists do not "explain" the world. It is not part of their job. So far as their function may be at all related to "the world," as a whole, it is to describe, not to explain. To explain is the function of philosophers (or was). The prevailing mood amongst philosophers is to refuse to make interpretations of the facts. Interpretations involve value-judgments and these go beyond the province of the philosopher of science. Furthermore, before one can talk, *logically*, about order, mind, or reason, these terms have to be submitted to analysis. The words "order" and "reason" would certainly be allowed, but only within a context of meaning which would not permit them to be used in the way in which they are used in that sentence from *A Free Religious Faith*.

The term "mind" would certainly not be allowed at all. So, if Unitarians want to make that kind of statement, they must not describe it as scientific or logical or even rational; if they want to be scientific, they must not make that kind of statement.

The scientific attitude today (and I refer to the attitude manifested by philosophers of science, not natural scientists who make philosophically-sounding remarks without any knowledge of the rules of logical philosophy) unmistakably asserts that there is nothing in the observable facts which suggests more than the facts themselves. The stars in the heavens, the electrons in their orbits, the facts of evolution, the behaviour of chromosomes are, in strictly scientific terms, evidence for nothing but themselves. They do not point to something beyond themselves. If someone thinks they do, he is adding something to the facts, something from his own imagination or belief. This is not to say that his imagination plays him false or that his belief is not legitimate. It is simply that there is no common objective proof of what he "sees" beyond the facts. There is thus no *scientific* evidence for his vision.

When we agree on this (as we are forced to since if there were scientific evidence for "something beyond the facts" we should all have to recognise it when its existence was demonstrated, as it would have to be) the decks are cleared. Whatever we may now say about God, the one thing we cannot say is that scientific discoveries "confirm" his existence. They do nothing of the sort. They are in themselves quite neutral. It is the construction we put on them that is the key to their meaning for us; and the construction we put on them comes from within us, not from outside.

One reaction to the chilling discovery that faith cannot be confirmed by *knowledge about* is to assert that God cannot possibly be known in the experience of man, and that his revelation is quite incapable of interpretation. This is what Karl Barth affirms, and then spends an inordinate amount of print-space making the very subjective interpretation he says is impossible.

The conclusion seems inescapable. All the knowledge we may have about the world is knowledge (in the last resort) not worth having. It is knowledge about atomic weights and cell-division and the structure of sentences; and even this "knowledge" is suspect since it appears to rest ultimately on certain *assumptions* which form the basis of the scientific disciplines, including mathematics. It is true that this kind of knowledge, doubtful or not, helps us to live longer and keep warmer and travel faster and converse more intelligibly; yet there is a nagging insistency behind all these activities that the knowledge which would be worth having is knowledge about the whole sum of things; "why are we here?" "what is it all about?"

Answers to this kind of question are not given in the external world. No amount of study of the facts, in itself, will yield solutions. The answer, if there is an answer, has to be apprehended by one's

total personality. That at least is the existentialist response. It seems to me it is the only possible position for people, like Unitarians, who cannot seek refuge by an appeal to "authority", yet who are convinced that there is a meaning in life which finally does justice to the whole universe of experience; of thought and feeling and activity.

This reaction, which I take to be the continuing thread in the Unitarian tradition right from the very beginning, even underlying the attempts to "demonstrate God" by the processes of reason, is a reaction which comes about not because men and women become acquainted with the rigours of scientific philosophy and retreat into a kind of obscurantist individualism saying "I know, I know," when all the time they have no knowledge at all, but only an obsessional need for knowledge. No, it is a position that has been there essentially all the time (in the good Unitarian). He has not sought to "explain" the problem of life, but to resolve it. This he has done in his worship and in his behaviour. He has striven for a certain poise which has enabled him to live successfully, not by turning his back on the presence of suffering, futility and death, but by living with them, finding their meaning for himself in a courageous stance amongst them; and by sharing his fears and his strivings with his fellows.

Yet for all that, something came over the Movement in the nineteenth century which has been its undoing. Like the rest of religious organisations in Britain it came under the spell of the shallow optimism of the times. The fact of death, which is where most religions have begun, was forgotten. Nineteenth-century liberals, along with the humanists, declared that they were not concerned with death, they were concerned with life. Yet this was not true. They proceeded to erect great sentimental doctrines about the abiding achievements of the human race, about the immortality of posterity, about the imperishable nature of good deeds, and so on. Funeral orations were mostly a recital of a man's good works, they said little about the irrevocable fact of his demise. In this way the liberals sought not to meet death, but to escape it.

This heritage came down into the twentieth century. The horizons of human prowess seemed unlimited. There was nothing man might not accomplish, no perfection in society he might not achieve. World War I reminded us of mortality. The horror consisted not in the fact that so many people died (they would have to die eventually anyway) but that in "dying before their time" and in such evident numbers and anguish we could no longer blind our eyes to the fact that death was a feature of the human condition. This is the one universal, equal, indispensable feature.

The rest of the century so far, and World War II especially, drove home the lesson. Man dies. We came back to the hub of existential reality with a jerk; and there was no church to speak to us.

For that is what churches are for; that is what religion is about—life and death; and life lived in terms of the prospect of death. Once admit the significance of death in human experience and you find yourself having to re-assess the whole of your living; unless the problem of death is resolved, nothing is resolved. Significance vanishes; futility, apathy, nihilism, despair set in. The standard responses are escapism, suicide, insanity.

Looking at the world today, we find these responses in abundance. The orthodox churches, finding that the liberalism they had imbibed could no longer touch their adherents at the point of their deepest need, fell back on the old solutions. It is an indication of the measure of man's lust for faith that hundreds of thousands of the rationally-unconvinced took up the old creeds again; when the soul cried out, the mind abdicated. Yet it is also an indication of the measure of man's disillusionment that millions dropped away from the church, keeping lurking somewhere in their personalities a vague glimmer of hope, but not daring to look at it too closely in case it might turn out to be a light lit only by their own desperation.

There are, you might say, two forms of religion, escapist and existentialist. Escapist religion is religion which offers to resolve the problem of life in return for conformity to a certain pattern of behaviour. It is always legalistic, ritualistic. It lays great stress on the performance of observances and submission to authority. It is frequently closely allied to the state. In one way or another the burden of resolving the problem is lifted from the shoulders of the believer in return for his obedience.

Existentialist religion, on the other hand, throws the believer back on himself. It reminds him of the facts of his existence, it insists that faith can only come out of freedom, it repudiates religious legalism, it asserts that since the individual is ultimately alone this is how he must face God. Its piety is inward, its true church is in the heart, its sacrament is freedom.

On this score Jeremiah was an existentialist and Ezekiel an escapist; Jesus was an existentialist and the Sanhedrin were escapist. In our age men from Kierkegaard to Berdyaev have stood for the existentialist view, while the conventional church, in the main, has represented the escapist view. It is also true, and should be said, that religion has often combined the two elements, sometimes within the same church, sometimes within the same man.

In the long run what might conceivably happen is that escapism will become so perfected (we are only at the beginning of television and the large-scale industries of soporific diversion) that nobody will bother about anything and world war or world dictatorship will ensue; or there will be some sort of kick-back that will remind people of their transience once more and thus throw them willing victims into the arms of the best-organised authoritarian church on the scene. One way or another, dictatorship, political or religious or both, will follow on the resignation from personal decision and

the abdication of individual faith. That is, unless there is a move to attack this trend root and branch and to replace it by a trend towards a religion of inner conviction, freely entertained, communally fostered, socially expressed.

Many of the key personalities of the day, men and women of maturity and personal power, are beginning to contract right out of the social process. The thing has become so animal, so purposeless, that they seek to preserve a little world of value for themselves with their record-player and their books (old books) by the fire. The intelligentsia retreats into archaeology or historical criticism or heraldry. The field is left clear for the bumptious and the neurotic.

The reason for this is that communication between individuals is quite clearly breaking down in modern western society. The old community pattern has almost gone, it will never re-appear. Mass communications, mass industry, mass government, mass commerce, mass entertainment are the order of today, and as far as we can see, of tomorrow. How is a man to preserve the precarious point of his individuality in all this except by cutting himself off from it and hoping against hope that he can bring up his children to be immune to it? This is a forlorn hope, and well he knows it at some depth in his being. Nothing can be done against it unless men act in concert, determined to create some kind of community dedicated to the defence of personality.

There is only one kind of community that may conceivably do this henceforth. It is the free religious community. It must develop techniques, teaching, practices aimed at keeping men free that they may meet the challenge of life full on, and overcome it. It is like the religion of the catacombs again—men seeking and feeling together in a kind of holy trepidation.

Such a community, such a church, must be prepared to welcome into its fellowship all who are ready to look along that path, regardless of what propositions about life and destiny they are prepared, or not prepared, at the moment, to make. There are many ordinary people among the new crop of "non-believers" who would welcome such a church. They are represented at their best, by J. P. Corbett, a confessed agnostic, who gave a talk on the Third Programme recently. Though technically I hold that he should be regarded as an atheist, since it is not possible to believe in God and not to believe at the same time, he is the kind of man who reveals the existentialist attitude which (at the risk of sounding trite) one must say declares him nearer to God than a good many "believers." This is a short extract from his talk:

"As every friend or thinker, artist or teacher, lover or player knows, all our activities inexorably defeat themselves. The will is infinite and the execution confined; the desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit. We can never escape the knowledge of our solitude, our incapacity, our ignorance. Therefore, we can never escape the suffering which that knowledge holds. . . .

"The first work of the great religious teachers has always been to drive these points relentlessly home until the hearer feels the sufferings of his soul as sharply as a toothache. . . . They tell us neither to neglect our inherent imperfection nor to be down-cast by it. They all tell us to face it, to dwell upon it, and to raise our hopes above it. They all tell us not to try to escape into the false oblivions of unceasing work or pleasure, or to try to shut ourselves up into the citadels of our self-contained and isolated wills. They all insist that if only we will have the courage to push reflection onwards to the point where we begin to see that our suffering is self-imposed; if only, unshaken by that knowledge, we will still demand the satisfaction which we admit that we ourselves cannot conceivably merit or provide; if only, as the depth of our egoism begins to dawn upon us, we will throw all the resources of our will into the service of our neighbour: then, in a mysterious but resistless way, the very desperation of the attempt becomes our hope, and the boundlessness of desire our satisfaction. A great light illuminates the world; a great force sustains our actions; a great joy ties the ends of time together."

This is the kind of convincing utterance which could only have come from a man already persuaded of its truth. How many more such are there? Mr. Corbett himself says: "there are many of us who are as hostile as any sceptic towards the decaying remnants of one old systematisation of religion and towards all sentimental talk about some kind of "higher" knowledge, unlinked to action in the world; and yet who cannot think it is enough just to assert that hostility and then to relapse unthinkingly into the usual round of life." (*The Listener*, January, 9th, 1958).

The new clean integrity of a man like that who thinks and feels and is not ashamed of either activity is a quality sorely needed in religious communities today (ours amongst them). The church that can reconstruct its faith in terms of immediate vital experience and can rest its case on that and that alone will stand a chance of redeeming the time. Such a church could begin the conversation across the barriers of tradition and institutions and empty philosophising, that might yet result, as *A Free Religious Faith* puts it, in that "Church of the Free Spirit, giving men new strength and courage to accept the challenge and the responsibilities of freedom."

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."

AT THE CINEMA—AN ADDENDUM

It isn't irony to say that for a small group of us the most moving religious experience at the annual meetings of the General Assembly in London this year was going to the cinema. The film was "The Seventh Seal," a new Swedish production cast in the form of a mediaeval morality play but as twentieth-century in purport as its lank-haired, duffle-coated viewers.

The theme is nothingness. The Plague haunts Europe. Back from the wars in the Holy Land come a Danish knight and his squire, frustrated, lost, strange. The people whom they knew are the same, yet not the same. While the squire sleeps, Death comes to claim the knight. He prevaricates. There is one thing he must discover; will the dark lord play chess with him for the respite that he needs? The game begins.

We are living in the context of religion. The churches, the priests, the images, the beliefs, are all there. As the Plague spreads the priests rant, the people fall into agonies of self-torment and wild prayer. The knight watches blankly, the squire with disgust. They watch a young girl burned as a witch. The squire's atheist face is touched with compassion, terrible because it is futile, as the maid looks madly into the flames. The knight strains his eyes to catch in hers the secret he longs to know. "What does she see?" he cries. "She sees nothing," says the squire.

This is the drama of our time; essentially the drama of every time, but certainly, universally, ours. All the ingredients are there: the strolling player and his wife living for their baby and the occasional silly vision, tumbling from tomorrow to tomorrow; the old smith with a rickety marriage and a heart full of maudlin sentiment; the priests declaiming against the insecurity of the people, to compensate for their own; and these two, the knight and the squire, the high-born and the low-born, the church-educated and the brothel-educated, their faith gone, their fun gone, adrift in a life without meaning, heading for nothingness.

The film brings us back to the beginning of religion—the problem of death—for the problem of death is at the same time the problem of God. The knight has lived in terms of a conventional faith. It is shattered. The squire has lived for his genitals. The Plague has numbed them. What is there now to live for? or, more pertinently, what is there now to die for?

This is pure existentialism. The individual is thrown back upon himself. The knight visits the confessional; the priest turns out to be Death. The squire goes into a church for a chat with a painter; he is painting the horrors of the Plague. There is no escape; neither in eating or drinking or playing or loving. There is no answer; not from priests or in a witch's eyes. The struggle for God, for meaning, is within, within!

These companions are aspects of the mood of our time. The squire is Sense and outward reason; the knight is Feeling and inward reason. They are held together by integrity, the squire by his refusal to believe, the knight by his desperate need, in spite of everything, to believe. They expose our modern condition. The entire Christian structure becomes revealed as a system for persuading people to believe in belief. The new integrity born of the marriage between philosophy and psychology will not allow this. The hunger of the soul for God is not fed with a Father-figure, or a god-man, or a book,

or the Christian tradition (whatever that may mean). Faith is a compulsion. We believe because we must, not necessarily because we want to, and certainly not for reasons of good order, social stability, mental well-being or academic propriety.

"The Seventh Seal" strips away the illusion that faith is a by-product of hearing about a man who went up a mountain; it directs one to go up the mountain oneself; and every body has a mountain. It is called life. This film is tragic in the extreme. The knight dies without ever knowing the answer to his question. At least we are left unaware that he knows the answer, which is how it must be. He cannot go up the mountain for us. Yet "The Seventh Seal" is showing to packed houses. The audience comes out as if coming out of church.

I hope our Commission on Unitarian Faith and Doctrine will see this film before they write their book.

Tom Wardle is now minister of the Kendal Unitarian Chapel, after training for the Ministry at the Unitarian College, Manchester. Previously a journalist and lecturer, he visited the U.S.A. in 1955 for the Society of Friends. Previous article: "Humanism and Theism," in No. 28.

The Idea of God in Man

J. FORD LEWIS, PH.D.

OF all the tyrannies on human kind," runs a couplet of John Dryden, "the worst is that which persecutes the mind." Dryden knew what he was talking about. He was born in the middle of the Thirty Years' War, one of the bloodiest and most devastating Armageddons ever carried out by the followers of the Prince of Peace in the name of Christian principles. Just prior to his birth, France had suffered a series of blood-letting wars between Protestants and Catholics. Spain was at the height of the Inquisition. For two centuries France, Spain and England had been forcibly expelling Jews from their borders. Russia was in the grip of the cruel and oppressive rule of the Romanovs. During Dryden's entire lifetime, England was never free from savage religious and political conflict over the minds and consciences of Englishmen. It was a time of tyranny and tragedy but, with all the rest, it became a germination time for tolerance, too.

Today from the pavement of the Campo dei Fiori in Rome there rises a statue of Giordano Bruno who lived and died a few years before Dryden appeared to state the case for the free mind. Here in the plaza where his name is now officially honored, "The Square of Flowers," Bruno was burned alive on February 17, 1600 for no other offense than the ideas he held and insisted on freely expressing. It is with brief reference to one of those ideas, on the nature of God and man, that we are concerned.

First of all, it is pertinent to observe that a man's theology is greatly colored and influenced by his personal temperament. Historically, many Christians seem to have assumed that the majority opinion, particularly theological opinion relating to creeds, was the voice of God. But in theology, as in all other intellectual disciplines, individual differences produce variation. Augustine, for example, and most of the medieval theologians, including John Calvin who, born 300 years too soon, held a less than flattering view of man and, quite naturally, thought of God as an austere and contemptuous Supreme Judge.

For a thousand years Augustine's melancholy estimate of man prevailed. This theology of despair reached its summit of influence in the *Summa Theologia* of Thomas Aquinas, who believed God to be the absolute and only being, apart from whom no real existence was possible. In one aspect of his nature he was transcendent, wholly above and remote from the world, unapproachable by any effort man might make. In another aspect, since the world was too depraved and contemptible to be accepted as being real, God was conceived as being the only reality. In this sense he was immanent, within all things, moving through the world and the universe and expressing himself variously in all separate events. Nevertheless, in spite of his metaphysical notion of the immanent presence of God in every atom of the universe, Aquinas remained orthodox in his belief that communion with God was forever denied, both here and hereafter, to all but Catholic Christians.

Gradually, however, the forbidding intellectual glaciers melted and the frosty pronouncements were heard less often as the last great theological ice age receded before the tempering and humanizing influence of the Renaissance. The climate of thought took a turn for the better. Out of the same raw materials, the familiar phenomena of human experience, radically different conclusions came to be drawn. God was still thought of as divinely present everywhere, but this assumption was based on concepts wholly alien to the medieval mind. Whereas Augustine's followers had denied all reality apart from God out of contempt for the world and backed reluctantly into a theology of immanence in one aspect of God, men of the Renaissance stressed the *positive* immanence of God out of their conviction of the world's essential greatness.

In religion, as well as literature and art, man as man came back into favor in a way unheard of since the decline of Athens, except briefly among the Stoics. Michaelangelo and Raphael glorified the human form through their art; Montaigne and Erasmus espoused the cause of humanism in their writings. The beauty and harmony of nature were exalted, and writers, who previously had been drawn from the ranks of literate churchmen, tended increasingly to treat the world not as a living purgatory, a shivering place to be wretchedly endured for the sake of a greater glory to come, but as a pretty fine place after all, perfectly justified on its own merits.

The idea of divine transcendence, the concept of God as an absentee landlord, found less merit in the eyes of Giordano Bruno than the thought of an all-pervading divine essence. "The God of the Philosopher is *not* a jealous God," he insisted, "he is truth and goodness, he reveals himself in all nature, to all men, and in all religions." It is deceptively easy for us to miss the revolutionary importance of this point of view. Not only did it represent a direct break with the prevailing orthodoxy, but it provided the philosophical foundation for the growth of tolerance and humanitarianism, imperfect though it has been, during the ensuing three and a half centuries.

Christianity inherited from Judaism the concept of God as a person when it took over the Jewish Law, the Writings of the Prophets. A corollary idea, the notion of a "jealous God," was the black-sheep twin of monotheism. These three together, anthropomorphism, monotheism and particularism, when applied by a totalitarian hierarchy, which should have nourished and sustained the individual, often operated to crush him in the name of religion.

Sporadic efforts had been made to humanize and temper the elements of oriental despotism surviving in Christianity. "Raise the stone and thou shalt find me," declares the most familiar of the Oxyrynchus Logia, "cleave the wood and I am there." But it is doubtful whether Jesus, who is credited with this saying, actually spoke the words, or whether he believed in a God so intimately present and apprehensible everywhere. The doctrine of the *Logos* as a kind of Platonic Idea or lesser deity of some sort whose purpose was to mediate God to man and man to God was yet another effort on the part of some early Christian thinkers to bring the element of divinity into human life and make it more liveable.

Cause and effect are often difficult, perhaps impossible, to establish in matters of belief and action. Does a person have a high regard for his fellow-men because he believes that they incorporate some essence of divinity in their souls? Or does he become a theological immanentist, (in reverse fashion), because he holds his fellows in high esteem? Which comes first, the idea of God in man, giving him dignity on that account, or the preconceived and natural notion of man's innate worthiness, leading to the doctrine of immanence?

For our purposes, it is not necessary to answer these questions. What we are confronted with, in the study of the life of any given thinker, is a total Gestalt, or organized pattern of hypotheses and conclusions. And the configuration of that pattern is such that, generally speaking, he who believes in man, believes in God in man, while he who believes in a God remote from man, tends to be indifferent to man, particularly the individual, if not actually hostile to him. The effect of a man's inner psychology on his theology is a subject deserving of more research, but what is involved seems to be not so much a process of linear progress from an idea of God to a

relationship with man, as a circular and mutually interacting continuum of thought and deed which, like matter and energy, are identical and interchangeable in their different phases.

Assuming that the theologian's mind is well integrated and disciplined (a proposition not absolutely and universally true) it will be in harmony with itself. This is the important point, not the hen-and-egg question of causality. Whenever God is made a Super Shah-in-Shah, King of Kings, man is inevitably brought low. The focus is placed on the Great Potentate, by comparison with which man, the subject, becomes as nothing. Whenever, on the other hand, man is dignified, God in turn is glorified, for man is seen as the first and best hope of fanning the common spark of divinity into flame in helpful, human ways.

"According to the saying of Solomon," wrote Bruno, "The spirit of God filleth all the earth, and that which containeth all things." This conforms to the doctrine of Pythagoras explained by Vergil in the text of *Aeneid*, "Heaven and earth and the watery plains and the moon's lucid ball and Titan's starry fires are kept alive by a spirit within. A mind pervading each limb stirs the whole frame and mingles with the mighty mass." Inspired as he was by the Christian Neoplatonists and Jewish Kabalists, as well as various Oriental teachers, it was natural for Bruno to conclude that "God is in all things."

Being of that persuasion, it was natural also that the church should seek to destroy his writings along with him, root, stalk and branch. Mystical communion with the Divine was all very well, but when an ordained Dominican priest taught that God "reveals himself in all nature, to all men, and in all religions," he struck at the foundations of an exclusive, chosen church, at an exclusive revelation—the Bible—at the tradition of the Fathers, at papal and conciliar pronouncements, and at an exclusive body of interpreters—the priesthood. But as the light of the Renaissance grew brighter in Italy, the shadow of the Inquisition grew correspondingly blacker, and death, by some strange and perverse rule of history, was the reward of many whose only crime was their effort to deliver their fellowmen from the most debasing mental and spiritual bondage.

But if the condemnation of Bruno by the church was natural, in view of its monolithic structure and neolithic philosophy, admiration for him is just as natural in men today who, thanks partly to him, have a more enlightened point of view. We recognize a fellow spirit in the viewpoint that "he believes rashly who believes without the aid of reason; for God, who bestowed reason upon us, designed us to use it in research." And in the following passage we can see not only the prediction of the theory of evolution, but the anticipation of Schweitzer's reverence for life: "Each individual is the result of innumerable individuals. Each species is the starting point of the next. The mind of man differs from that of lower animals and of plants, not in quality, but only in quantity."

Today's generation is the beneficiary of Bruno's pioneering thought. Thanks to him, and to many kindred minds who preceded as well as followed him, man in search of an enduring and companionable *Weltanschauung* can find it in the idea of the immanence of God in man. Man is a citizen of the world. Indeed, he is part of its very substance. His relation to nature is neither one of superiority, as a being above it and separate from it, as God was conceived to be by the Scholastics, nor yet is he a pawn in the hands of relentless forces which grind on with mechanistic indifference and abandon, as the Schoolmen similarly insisted. His relation to nature and to nature's God is one of kinship.

If we cannot turn nature to our purposes or make God the servant of man, through supplication and intercession, we can understand that neither does God exploit us. The purposes of nature are the expression of our own true being. They are our purposes, for nature—or God, as one may choose—is us, all of us, and all things about us and within us and beyond us, just as the world beyond the horizon of the Ugly Duckling included the Ugly Duckling, too, in part, though it seemed for a time to be everyone else's world.

The tendency to alienate God from man, begun by Augustine and continued by the Scholastics and Calvinists, was augmented by the development of physical science. As men's understanding of natural law expanded, God was pushed into the background. His only role became that of Creator. It reached the point in Paley's *Natural Theology* of the classical comparison in which God is represented as a Cosmic Watchmaker who invented the universe, wound it up, set it to running according to certain laws and thereafter left it alone.

Now, however, this sort of bleak skepticism has been outflanked. The God who had been read out of the universe by 18th and 19th-century scientists, as unnecessary to explain it, has been brought back into the world and life to give it worth and meaning. To him who believes in an indwelling God, who considers himself, all men, all life and all existence to be the expression of an immanent, all pervading totality of divinity, life can have no terrors. He can say with Marcus Aurelius, the wise emperor, "To her who gives and takes back all, to Nature, the man who is instructed and modest says: 'Give what thou wilt, take back what thou wilt.'" And he says this, not proudly but obediently, and as well pleased with her." And he can, with Epictetus, the wise slave, "dare to look to God and say, 'Deal with me for the future as thou wilt, I refuse nothing that pleases thee'."

J. Ford Lewis is Minister of the First Unitarian Society, Stockton, California, since 1952, when he completed his training for the Ministry at Starr King School and took his Ph.D. in the University of California.

A Guess on Immortality

STAUNTON CALVERT

SURELY the first creature on earth to suffer the chilling foreknowledge of his own death needs greatly to be comforted therefor. This is one apparent reason why faith, if it may truly be counted a virtue rather than a wishful indulgence, is the most over-rated of human virtues. Not physical courage, as some writers have suggested, but faith.

Popular emphasis on faith has extended laterally, with notable vigor, from faith's concern with death's consequences and with God. Our fellows exhort us to a faith in our ability to achieve where we have not yet tried, though a more mature attitude toward the necessary risks might include instead a willingness to accept any failure without useless disappointment. When, in the habit of faith, foolishly we "believe in" another person and are disappointed, we are much the less able, because of the destruction of our "misplaced trust," to understand, to be compassionate, and to help.

In view of the fantastic array of errors concerned with life and death and deity which, among both "uncivilized" and "civilized" people, have received determined belief, and have been often the channels of cruel and violent action, it cannot be amiss for a man to take his own way into the larger areas of thought, unenveloped, unimpeded, by any inherited faith. This no devotee of dogma can reasonably deny.

Granted that our horror at the possibility we may be finite in the time dimension (though we are not perturbed by the corresponding brevity of our spatial dimensions) is related to a concept of time (as a simple infinite continuum) which probably is illusory, it still is interesting to guess at a manner in which human life may escape the human body. Until credible evidences appear, a serious guess will always interest any but those whose faith truly rejects it, and they, unless their faith is as solid as they may say it is, are likely to be upset and angry.

Since the organism upon which the evident human life stands, as a flame upon its base of fuel, at death must cease and decay, surely any further life must be even more different than the life of the baby from that of the embryo. The ideas are familiar that what we perceive as conscious life—for consciousness is the truly unique and significant phenomenon!—is, in the phase in which we perceive it, only existent within organisms, that it may have another phase of existence, in which it is not supported by the mechanics of any organism, and that it may be incapable of being created or destroyed by birth or death.

My speculation on such a second phase, beyond these ideas, is not presented in the spirit of those ancients who indulged in

philosophical speculations without subjecting them to available tests; I would gladly delay mentioning any aspect of the idea until tests were made, if any appeared to be possible. Unable to conceive of a test, I present the idea as a pure guess—not by any means as a belief, or a theory, and only with hesitation, as an hypothesis.

The idea is that life in a second phase, not being dependent upon individual organisms as in the first phase, may not be partitioned. That is, it may be a single conscious entity, vastly complex, receiving contributions through the “deaths” of individuals leaving the first phase, and supplying the consciousness of those entering this first phase, as the sea receives rivers and rains and gives up vapors. Essential life, perhaps, is as completely, nongranularly fluid as energy and, like energy, in being “expended” only changes its form.

The implications of this idea are not at all disturbing, particularly those affecting attitudes and ideals. Certainly, in the phase in which each of us is a compartmented unit of life, the development of the individual would, ideally, be paramount, for only so could the nature of the present phase be exploited to the benefit of life in both phases. With this idea, the interaction of personalities would appear more than ever to be an essential source of life's development, and the value accorded to tolerance and understanding would be heightened. Against such a background, the advantages of a free state over a totalitarian state (which attempts unnaturally to assume some of the aspects of the second phase) would be more than ever pronounced.

The implications relating to existing beliefs are interesting too. Apparently our concern for finding those who precede us past “death” would cease; we would expect our love for them to be generalized in the self-love of the mass of life in the second phase. It would seem that, over there, the injunction “thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” would be simplified by one long step, since the neighbor and the self would be included in the single entity. The belief in punishments and rewards to individuals in a second life, which doubtless has been more damaging than beneficial, would become impossible. Presumably there would be no dividing line between what entered the second phase and what did not except the line between conscious life and all else, and therefore all conscious life here in the “lower animals” would be included. Apparently also, the old question whether human life is reincarnated, either in human form or in other animal form, would be as meaningless as an attempt to identify individual calories of heat and determine which ones passed from a warmer object to a cooler one. The old speculations on the possibility that a life after death may be independent of time and space appear to be unaffected by the present consideration; there seems to be no indication in the central idea whether life in the second phase may exist in both time and space, or in time but not space, or in neither.

Speculation may be interesting on what kinds of experience might be available to mature or otherwise change the living entity of the second phase, as experience matures, in such widely varying ways and degrees, our individual lives in the phase we know. It is difficult to imagine how the experience could include perception of physical existence or phenomena, other than through memory, inasmuch as such perception, in the present life, appears to be initiated by the expenditure of physical energy in various forms upon variously sensitive physical tissues. Surely it would be exciting enough if the mass of life devoted itself to a vast introspection. In this, any memory of past events in the "first phase" which involved two or more individuals might be perceived in terms of the group, however small or large, rather than the individual.

Perhaps the frequent strong sense of identity of thought or feeling with another individual or with a group is not completely illusory, as, under ordinary suppositions, we must believe that it is. If the mind of the individual is only a process supported by the body in somewhat the way a flame is supported by a candle, the sense of identity would seem illusory; but if the mind is derived from a single great source with all other minds, and moves toward its eventual fusion with that source, the sense of identity may be derived in part from the past experience of actual identity in the "second phase," or at least from a natural similarity of minds.

Here let us consider a slight elaboration of the idea first presented; let us admit the possibility that the immediate result of "death" may be that the individual consciousness, instead of contributing itself wholly and immediately to a single conscious entity which is central to the second phase of life, may only begin a process of integration into that entity, and that the second phase is more heterogeneous than in the first concept in that it includes not only the great central entity but small conscious entities in varying degrees of becoming united with the center. This modification of the original idea would imply a possible basis for reincarnations of unassimilated individual consciousnesses, and even for some present contact with the "dead," though it would not appear to argue the likelihood of either of these. It suggests also that the individual consciousness, prior to complete assimilation, may experience its most realistic awareness of its own life in the first phase, and view with mixed pleasure and regret what it now must contribute to the central entity.

The larger, or more integrated, personalities may be the slower to relinquish the last of their individuality; some of the famous, and many whom fame does not reach, may remain prominent for centuries upon the general scene of life, each one's character affecting the mass as a river's color touches, at the river's mouth, the sea. Where characters are alike, perhaps they unite in the process of total absorption, or perhaps this is true of identical or similar characteristics in two or more personalities. Deferring the obvious

implications affecting partners in marriage, and relatives, and friends, let us consider the ironic possibility that a disruptive characteristic common to a husband and wife might, after causing their divorce, later in the course of nature rejoin them.

Within either the simpler or the more complex concept of the second phase of life, it seems admissible that, since the apparent amount of consciousness in an individual grows as he matures and diminishes in senility (if that occurs), the flow of conscious life into the individual from the life of the second phase may continue during mental growth, and the flow in the other direction may begin before "death" and be completed, abruptly, at the occurrence of that familiar accident.

Speculations can be endless on the questions whether, if there is a second phase of conscious life, there may be a third, or more, and if so, whether the life of the second phase can perceive a succeeding phase or the preceding one, and so on. Also, since the existence on the earth of organisms capable of sustaining consciousness goes back only a limited time, life may have existed in what has here been discussed as a "second phase" while awaiting the development of the physical world to the attainment of a set of conditions permitting a percolation through the "first phase."

Finally, this hypothesis, seriously considered, would open a new vista upon the nature of the relationship of conscious life to God—a question whether life, in both or all its phases, is a single creation of God, a member of God analogous to a member of an organism, or an aspect of God.

Whether or not a survival of conscious life may correspond to the present hypothesis, it seems probable that any survival is not a leap to a perfect heaven, but in some way a continuation of natural events in the long flow of life, no more miraculous or cataclysmic than birth.

The ideas here, obviously more pleasant than the possibility of an end to all thought and feeling, and more credible than any of the dogmas, invite belief. To plunge into a belief that some of the present intuitions are factual may be at least as easy as to be true to the faith of our fathers—or of others' fathers—particularly when we reflect that if in these matters we do not leap to conclusions, we may never arrive at any. Surely it is "nobler in the mind" to bear the discomfort of doubt, even the sharpness of bewilderment, in the hope of remaining alert to reason, to better intuitions, and to any perceptible evidence.

Staunton Calvert is known to us, as yet, only as a layman of Washington, D.C. who has been guessing in an interesting way.

Unitarian Christianity and a Christian Unitarianism

GEORGE HUNTSTON WILLIAMS

*Preached at the Ordination of Richard Spencer Ham, S.T.B.
at Fall River, Massachusetts, November 13, 1956*

"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." *I Thess. 5:21.*

YOU who are members of the Unitarian Society in Fall River are here gathered to ordain and install as your minister, one who takes his place in a succession going back to 1832.

One of the most renowned of your ministers was Samuel Longfellow, brother of the famous poet and professor of romance literature at Harvard. Samuel himself was a poet; many of his hymns are to be found in our hymnal. At the Harvard Divinity School, Samuel had become associated with that group of hymn-writers who have been called, in the history of American hymnody, the "Cambridge School."

His inspiration was that literary, philosophical, and religious movement called "Transcendentalism," which rose within the Unitarian circle, eventually dividing it into two parties, and which did not spend its full force even after giving up its name following the Civil War, when it came to be more commonly designated "Theism." "Theism" was a term used in self-conscious distinction to "Unitarian Christianity." For Transcendentalism, or Theism, broke away on principle from Christianity's claim to uniqueness among the world religions. People today, who use the terms "Unitarian Christian" and "Theist" interchangeably should be reminded that these labels formerly designated the two opposing parties created by Transcendentalism within the Unitarian denomination.

Your minister of about a century ago (1848-1851) wrote an important essay entitled "Theism," in which he defended the universal as distinguished from the particularistic or Christian conception of Unitarianism. We can at this point have no more apt and specific a description of Theism in its comprehensiveness than the words of Samuel Longfellow himself:

Religious is a higher and broader word than Christian; and so is Human. Jewish, Brahmin, Buddhist, Parsee, Mohammedan, these, too, are churches of the One Living God, the Father of all. With advancing light, thoughtful men in all of them will come out of what is peculiar and special in each, and so local and temporary, into the broad ground of universal, spiritual religion, which is Piety, Righteousness, Humanity, that belief in God and in man which is the creed of all creeds. . . . This is the Eternal Gospel;

this the true Church Catholic; the Church not of Rome, nor of England; the Church not of Buddha, nor of Moses, nor of Christ; but of God and Man.

There can be but few in this congregation who are not moved by these words, winged by the exaltation of a universal vision of religion still to be realized.

Yet we know that the Church of Moses, the Church of Buddha, and all the others have in our day, far from coming closer together, actually intensified their convictions in the measure that especially the Asian and Moslem lands have awakened to their national heritages. Everywhere, religion, or an ideological substitute therefor, has become the instrument of national policy. Even our own country has rediscovered the Judaeo-Christian sanctions of Democracy, and has been tempted to interpret the world struggle solely in terms of a clash between believing Democracy and godless Communism.

In this new situation, with the world groping through the U.N. for new sanctions of law and order among the peoples and disparate social traditions of the earth, the historic interest of American Unitarians in, and openness to, what is commonly called "world religion" seems at once *pertinent* and yet *impotent*.

I have been invited to take the occasion of this ordination to reflect with you on the special missions of the religious body in the ministry of which a man is being set apart this day. And I have taken, not precisely as my text, but rather as my biblical sanction the verse from *I Thessalonians*, 5: 21, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

This was indeed the text chosen by William Ellery Channing when he was invited to preach the sermon at the ordination of Jared Sparks as the minister of the new independent Unitarian Society in Baltimore, in 1819. It need scarcely be mentioned that his sermon, entitled "Unitarian Christianity" is not only a classic of American Unitarianism, but also a widely acknowledged monument in the development of American Christianity as a whole, and even in American literary culture. In this sermon Channing sought to prove the validity of Scripture by subjecting it to the canons of reason, and to extricate from historic Christianity itself some five doctrinal principles to which he could hold fast as pre-eminently good. For many years this sermon, and the abundant commentary thereon, effectively defined the nature of Unitarianism until the Transcendentalism of which we have spoken came to divide the denomination into liberal Christians in the line of Channing, on the one hand, and the supra-Christian Theists on the other. In the course of American Unitarian history most of the Theists remained within the denomination. And most of the liberal Christians, by imperceptible changes, became in effect, and often in name, Theists. Concurrently, some of the Theists and many of their successors came to call themselves Humanists, in their more radical phrasing of their position. Thus the denomination has, broadly speaking,

three main strands: liberal Christians, Theists, and Humanists, whose genetic and theological relationship is obscured, not only by the common, over-simplified contrast Humanist-Theist, but even by the name of the denomination itself. He who is a Humanist cannot, in terms of the original theology of the denomination, properly be called "Unitarian" any more than "Trinitarian." Indeed the recognition of the inapplicability of a designation that distinguishes those who believe in the unity of God from those who believe in a triune Deity has encouraged many members of the denomination to re-define the denominational label and construe it as indicative of the common quest of the free mind for religious and social unity. In this spirit, a western Unitarian newspaper has long borne the name *Unity*.

All three of the positions distinguished can vindicate for themselves a rightful place in the ever-expanding denomination. I should like to look back with you upon a century and a half of American Unitarianism and suggest ways in which Unitarians may prove all things done and said in these three trends and, holding fast to that which has proved good, reconceive their mission in today's religious setting.

American Christianity and, one might add, American culture, cannot be understood by those who fail to perceive the tremendous contribution of Unitarians in the early and middle nineteenth century out of all proportion to the size of the denomination. It is clear that the role of Unitarians in the present need not be the same as in the past. And as one who holds that the church must always discharge the dual role of the priestly conserver, and the prophetic critic of society at large, and even of religion itself, I should not wish to be seen standing here urging an uncritical return to the Unitarian past. Nevertheless, the most natural title for what I can here only outline—for ordination sermons are not so long as they were a century and a half ago—is "Christian Unitarianism." The fact that one can phrase such a title is a clear indication of what has happened to the movement which began in Massachusetts about one hundred and fifty years ago, and which Channing described as "Unitarian Christianity." For the very designation "Christian Unitarianism" presupposes the existence and the widespread acceptance of other kinds of Unitarianism.

Without disputing their place in the denomination and the seriousness of their witness, I should like to invite you to look with me at five points of a liberal Christianity, which may be said to have found full, or at least groping, expression in the past 150 years; and which, when adequately supplemented to round out the full life and thought of any complete religious society, should give promise of an, at least, equally significant century and a half ahead; for there are thousands of Christians and would-be Christians who today deeply long for a fresh formulation of inchoate convictions, hopes, and surmises in respect to Christianity and its role in the

world today which perhaps no other Christian denomination is so well fitted by its history and aptitudes to carry out as is the Unitarian branch.

These five points do not constitute the whole of a Unitarian Christianity, with a mission so conceived; but rather a selection of the natural ministrations and concerns, and the historically grounded specialties, as it were, of a denomination that would be prepared to rethink its position among the many branches of Christianity. It cannot be my purpose to elaborate, argue, and ground these points historically and theologically, but merely to suggest the pattern for an on-going discussion.

The first point concerns the relationship of Christianity to the religions of the world and to the vision of a mankind united in one household as brothers under God. In the measure that the main-line Protestant denominations along with the eastern Orthodox bodies turn in laudable ecumenical concern to bridge the gulfs that separate themselves, one from another, the inevitable consequences of their looking inward to their essence, and backward to their sources, is to become so preoccupied with Christianity that conversations with believing and unbelieving groups outside Christendom are largely suspended; and this lull comes at the very moment in world-history when Buddhism, Hinduism, and Mohammedanism have become notably articulate and reinvigorated by their new nationalist aspirations and cultural assignments. By historic experience and disposition a truly Christian Unitarianism is still strategically located to help in the mutual understanding so greatly needed today. But the Unitarian denomination does not become better suited to its interpretive or ambassadorial role among the world's religions by becoming less Christian itself.

Think of a political parallel. We wish to have our ambassador to India friendly to India and its culture. We know indeed that all nations appreciate the efforts of envoys to acquire the difficult languages, and to familiarize themselves with the history and culture of the peoples to whom they are accredited. But if our ambassador became so immersed in things foreign that he failed to represent the United States, he would have to be recalled, not because India, for example, is not just as important and worthy among the nations as our own, but simply because the task of an ambassador is to remain scrupulously loyal to his own country, with all its strengths and weaknesses, while trying to interpret to the best of his ability the needs and expectations of the nation to which he is accredited. It is the same in interfaith relations. Significant theological conversations cease when one or both parties become completely detached from their religious base in their preoccupation with religious unity. Unitarians have surely become detached from historic religion when they consider rites, myths, theological formulations, disciplines and organizations as inferior and compromising aspects of high religion, and propose that only by the attenuation,

relativisation, or even the elimination of them can the primary unity beneath in all of them be revealed to view. I submit that the "Church," using this word now as a generic term for the whole organizational and liturgical complex of meaningful religious life without which religion is but a dream or a vision glimpsed, must be as seriously heeded as theological and ethical generalizations.

To change the image; a bridge church must be in contact with both sides if spiritual traffic is to pass at all. Unitarianism must remain, or become once again, articulately Christian in order to continue to perform its bridge or ambassadorial role between Christianity and the other religions.

Beginning almost a hundred and fifty years ago Unitarians sought to carry out this mission, first among the bellicose Christian sects¹ themselves, and then among the world religions,² awakened to the task by the Transcendentalists who were especially interested in India. To continue in its irenic and interpretative role among the world religions, Unitarianism must in the future take more seriously than in the past the significance of Church and Tradition, both in Christianity and in the other religions.

For example, the ordination which you, the lay members of this church, will presently enact is especially meaningful in the theology of the original Congregationalism out of which both modern Congregationalists and Unitarians have emerged, for the local church duly gathered was conceived as possessing the powers and sanctions of the universal and invisible Church of God's Elect. But if the doctrine of Election and Christ's leadership of an invisible Church is weakened, the religious authority of the local congregations, and the policy we call "congregational" must be thought through afresh.

Unitarianism has continued the Puritan polity long after abandoning some of the theological reasons for it. In fact, Unitarians were originally so wary of ecclesiastical authority that in many places they came to prefer the word "society" to "church." But an alert denomination need not always be against the church. Or, to put it in another way, an historic opposition to, or mistrust of, the church and ecclesiasticism should be reconceived as a loyal opposition within the Great Church. Unitarians may oppose her excesses and what may seem to be her pretensions, but, as in the Mother of Parliaments, let the opposition be loyal to certain common traditions, and to the common Sovereign, who is Christ.

And this suggests the second point, namely, the relationships of Christianity and Judaism. Significantly, the Yigdol, which is a portion of the Eighteenth Blessing, of the synagogal service, has

¹ See author's *Rethinking the Unitarian Relationship with Protestantism: An Examination of the Thought of Frederic Henry Hedge* (1805-1890). (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949)—Ed.

² See author's "Harvard and Hinduism," *Awakened India*, LXI 1956, pp. 55-59, a portion printed in the *Christian Register*, CXXXIV (1955), p. 23—Ed.

been incorporated as the first hymn in the *Hymns of the Spirit*.¹ Reformed Judaism took its rise in Boston, and once acknowledged its indebtedness to the Unitarian spirit. But since those days of interchange the relations between Judaism and Unitarianism have slackened. Yet never in the long and mostly tragic history of Jewish-Christian relations has the opportunity been so great as today for significant interchange. The toll of millions of Jewish lives in our times and the more recent establishment of the Jewish state demand the closest attention of Christian and Jewish theologians, inquiring into the meaning of history and mutual suffering. The diabolically calculated crucifixion of the suffering servants of the tribe of Judah in the midst of a once Christian society, the fatherland of the Reformation, tolls with a deafening clang upon the ears of all for whom the providence and love of God and his Suffering Servant are meaningful concepts, and yet on both sides theologians move about on other theological or simply cultural errands as though they did not hear the insistent peal.

If we are earnest about the Oneness of God and about God's ongoing Israel of history, then Unitarians must here too activate their historic mission. Any Christian denomination in the Puritan or dissenting tradition has a special sense for the problem of the old and the new Israel. And Unitarianism, a late fruit of New England Puritanism, has an additional advantage among Christian bodies for the task of engaging in a significant exploration with Judaism; for Unitarianism does not start the conversations between Christians and Jews in a complicated theological language. Christian Unitarians enter the discussion with a conception of Christ that is not so dogmatically fixed that debate and deliberation are pointless. It is a fact that even liberal churchmen in other denominations, when they turn to Judaism, erect, as by reflex action, the ancient unaltered high Christology of a dogmatic age as the only basis for the theological interchange with Jews; when within their own fold they have assimilated rather freely the insights of modern biblical and historical criticism and are often prepared to work out fresh, christological formulations.

But the flexibility of the credally freer Unitarian Christian avails nothing if he has no Christology at all. For a form of Christianity without Jesus beheld in some sense as the Christ of prophecy and the Christ of our redemption cannot serve to represent historic Christianity in any exploratory exchange with Judaism, any more than Judaism can approach Christianity in a significant parley if it has lost all sense for the Talmud, and familiarity with the legacy of post-biblical Jewry and its tongue. Christian Unitarianism must have not only a renewed sense of the Church, but a theologically and historically reformulated concept of Jesus Christ.

And a third point concerns the relationship of believing men

¹ Also first hymn in Supplement to *Hymns of Worship*, No. 595, Lindsey Press, London, 1951.—Ed.

to God, and this means in historic Christian terms an understanding of the Cross. Channing's central indictment of the orthodox Christianity of his day was that its doctrine of the atonement contrived to deprive God of the attributes of love and mercy. In a famous sermon he declared in righteous indignation that orthodox Christianity had monstrosly erected a colossal gallows at the center of the cosmos, and had so recast the role of God, the Father of Jesus Christ, that he seemed more like an inexorable judge and executioner. And the very center of Channing's criticism was that orthodoxy seemed to have forgotten in its theological precision that the God of the Bible is a compassionate God who suffers with his people. In a letter to Samuel Cooper Thacher in 1815 Channing declared that the Greek philosophical idea of God as impassible and immovable had actually distorted the Biblical experience of God as a Father capable of both love and anger but in either case compassionate, but that Unitarian Christianity, by going back beyond the dogmatic systematization of the age of the great councils, had rediscovered the God who was in Christ reconciling Himself with the world and suffering with it and for it. Patripassionism, as this view was anciently called, is one of the first of the more sophisticated heresies, but it has found recurrent expression in the history of the Church, often inadvertently as in Luther, or indirectly but massively in the Catholic system in which Mary, as the Queen Mother of Heaven, suffers for and with her Son, even though the Heavenly Father does not. Unitarian Christianity has historically made a contribution in sensitizing Christian theologians to a major difficulty at the heart of this dogmatic structure, and can continue to make a meaningful contribution as long as it refuses to put the cross of Christ to one side as a tragic but theologically meaningless part of the mission of Christ. Channing believed not only in the crucifixion but the resurrection.

And this brings us to the fourth point, the relationship of religion and science. Unitarianism was the first Christian body in America to apply the principles of the growing natural sciences to religion; first to the Bible itself and then to the Christian life. Channing believed in the New Testament miracles, but his successors were the first to perceive the significance of the miracle of evolution and, in the face of the revolutionary disclosures of nineteenth century science, came away with hymns on their lips that have since enriched the hymnals of many denominations. American Unitarianism may look back with pride upon its traditional openness to the findings of science and is therefore temperamentally, so to speak, disposed to enter into ever more complex exchanges between science and religion today. But here again the usefulness of the interchange depends upon the mutual respect of the two parties to the debate or deliberation. And if Unitarianism has no distinctively religious position of its own, it wastes the time of the natural scientists. For if it is merely a matter of popularizing the findings of science, or

integrating them socially, there are more efficient agencies than the church. But there is in point of fact a real issue between the Christian and the scientist, *qua* scientist, and this is the question of the source of knowledge.

Religious people in general, and Christians in particular, maintain that beside reason and observation there is a second avenue through which meaning comes to us, namely, through revelation or faith. We are believing as well as knowing creatures. And therefore any significant exchange between religion and science must be undertaken by those who mutually agree, or at least are open to the possibility, that there are *two* valid ways of knowing. And only a Unitarian who has a creed, or better, the capacity to say *credo*, I believe, can deliberate creatively with the natural or social scientist, who, as scientist, uses only one avenue of knowledge, but who, as a man, may well yearn for something more. By creed, of course, I mean not a set of beliefs, but the capacity for belief and the recognition that man has another reason, which his scientific self knows not of.

And this leads to the last point, namely the relation between man and the mass, between people and peoples, and the authority of conscience. Thus far our key words have been Church, Christ, Cross, and Credo. In some sense a vital Unitarian participant in the major concerns and responding to the quests of our time must preserve or recover a place for all these, and for a fifth, Conscience.

Unitarianism, it has been well said, was originally a revolt against Protestant orthodoxy more in the realm of the doctrine of man than in the doctrine of God. It was first dubbed Unitarian by its opponents. But the regnant concern was with man. The latter-day emergence of Humanism within this denomination is a natural and legitimate consequence of this original preoccupation. Channing and his associates held that man, created in the image of God, is essentially good. This proposition seemed more self-evident then than it does to us a hundred and fifty years later. But for this very reason it is a theological proposition all the more to be cherished in an age where conscience is widely thought to be the product of manipulable social environment without ultimate sanctions in the nature of God our Creator, in an age when the liberal spirit is looked upon as a manifestation of bourgeois indecision, in an age when evil grimaces at us in the faces of juveniles in our suburban streets, in a day when the impounded hatreds of anti-communism spits upon the lynched corpse of communism.

There is a German proverb: We must not despair of humanity. The human world in which we live today is so ugly that that Christian group which can, soberly in the face of it all, declare with religious conviction and undecieved realistic vision, that man bears the image of the Creator of Heaven and earth, of Him who is the Lord of history and the Lord God of the hosts of embattled righteousness, will be able to lift a banner of hope to which men of good-will

may repair. But this sober and saving Humanism must be at once scientific and theological. Otherwise, pivoting human conduct around the conscience is fatuous. Unitarianism has been a denomination of the socially sensitized conscience and courageous action. To give but one example: it was the only denomination to take an official stand of conscience against the War with Mexico. For a hundred and fifty years it has been a denomination which has felt called upon to asseverate its principles of conscience in public resolutions. It has bestirred itself, often at great hazard to its reputation, in civil causes for the common good.

Richard Hasty, you are about to be ordained and installed as a minister of a local church and in a denomination which has pioneered, a denomination which has instinctively sought the frontiers even when clinging to its historic base on the cultured eastern seaboard. May this geographical tension be taken as a symbol of the spirit of the denomination, which, peering into and exploring the new frontiers of our day, will hold fast to the theological and ethical continuities of our civilization.

Therefore, as you prepare to enter into the ministry of a denomination whose spiritual roots go back much more than a hundred and fifty years, may I enjoin upon you to think seriously with your parishioners and your fellow-ministers about the appropriate missions and ministrations of Unitarianism in these days, to the end that, declaring the need of an organized CHURCH for the effectual embodiment of spiritual aspiration, proclaiming Jesus as the CHRIST of man's deepest yearnings, pointing to the true CROSS wherever it is set up, insisting on the place of the CREDO of divine disclosure as supplementary to the calculations of scientific discovery, and defending the sovereignty of CONSCIENCE grounded in the divine image within man, you may the more effectively minister to the needs of our age, make your contribution to the growing contacts between Christianity and other religions, restate in modern times the meaning of seeming tragedy and the role of suffering, notably in respect to Judaism, bring under the disciplines and insights of religion the overwhelming achievements and the global hazards of science, and uphold everywhere the dignity of men.

Strengthened by these convictions and concerns we can all enter humbly and creatively into those new relationships demanded of the adventurous in faith, leaving the outcome of our endeavor with Him, in whose fingers are the spaces and the times, and before whose face the generations rise and pass away.

George Huntston Williams is Winn Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Harvard Divinity School.

Towards a Unitarian Theology

BRUCE FINDLOW

A UNITARIAN theology means one of two things; either the theology of one individual Unitarian or a theology which Unitarians generally hold in common. In another kind of church it is reasonable to expect these two things to be the same, or at least similar; but among Unitarians the variety of individually held theologies is so great that any common theology usually seems impossible, however desirable it might be for reasons of denominational strength and harmony. Attempts at a general Unitarian theology are usually either universalizations of particular points of view or the compromise achieved by a small group of willing or representative minds, or the insistent claim of some part of the Unitarian world which believes (always erroneously) that it represents the whole. The flaw in trying to work from the multitude of personal Unitarian theologies to a common and acceptable statement of faith is that the personal theologies are fragmentary and self-contradictory as well as in conflict with one another and so the task is the fruitless one of trying to make a coherent whole out of incoherent parts.

This essay intends to discuss what might be the contents of a general Unitarian theology, but the matter will be approached from a more theoretical direction. First we will try to define who the Unitarians are—visible and invisible—then seek the authority which they would set at the core of their faith. Then we will apply this authority, within the framework of Unitarian practice, to the materials of faith and to the central problem of the man-God relationship and secondary problems which stem from that; in the hope of outlining the bare facts of a possible Unitarian theology as distinct from an actual synthesis of Unitarian views. This approach does not aim at any finality or any omniscience but is rather an experiment in pointing the way to a Unitarian theology in the wide sense while at the same time conducting an exercise in the narrower sense of the title.

Who are the Unitarians? The common view is that they are, visibly, all those who worship in Unitarian churches or at least belong to Unitarian churches and, invisibly, an indeterminate number of other people who are "Unitarians without knowing it." But this view will not do for a discussion of theology unless it be negative theology, for the binding material for these two groups of people is their common rejection of some Christian teachings and practices. The invisible Unitarians make this rejection by personal judgment and decision but this cannot be said to be true of all the visible Unitarians in our churches. Some of these inherit

this negative theology from their parents or grandparents, others accept it as the teaching of the church in which they happen to find themselves for some non-theological reason. So the invisible Unitarians have a better claim to the title than some of our members, inasmuch as the authority for their rejections is characteristically inward rather than external. But rejections are not enough and I take the real Unitarian to be the person who in his lifetime finds some sort of positive faith partly at least by his own exertions and partly at least through the use of his own reason. This makes the Unitarian a person with a positive desire for a religious faith and with some capacity for thought and reflection. He doesn't have to be articulate but he does have to be able to come to conclusions, in the light of evidence, for himself. These two qualifications are not present in everybody and so our appeal is to some people rather than to humanity in general. We may regret that many people do not seem to have a positive desire for a religious faith but I think we have to leave it to more violent and more dogmatic churches to engender that desire and concentrate our energies on those in whom the desire is present but unsatisfied. Our appeal is to a minority of thoughtful people (this does not imply a particular kind or level of education) but thoughtful people who are conscious of a need which only a religious faith can satisfy. A Unitarian theology has to satisfy them whether they are inside or outside our churches and in doing so it may not satisfy some who call themselves Unitarians without sharing its spirit.

To what authority does the Unitarian appeal to validate his theology? He is not always clear himself about this. He can usually say what it is not. It is not the authority of any church, or any one book, or any class of people who claim a special relationship with God. It is not the authority of tradition—what has been believed, nor the authority of mass opinion—what most people believe. It is not, we say, any external authority but an inward one; the last word lies within each individual in conscience or reason or intuition or the Inner Light; these terms overlapping or being sometimes synonymous for some people. We are agreed as to the inwardness of our authority but opinions vary as to its nature. Some say "reason" and go on to imply that we must not base our faith on anything which the mind cannot prove to be true to us. It is a narrow view and some errors arise from it; for example, the view that our faith must only consist of the beliefs our own mind can construct, a view which deprived some people of any clear faith at all. Equally narrow is the view of intuition as authority which makes our personal imaginings into articles of faith, or the view of conscience as an authority which overlooks its cultural conditioning and makes universals of beliefs which are peculiar to one race or one environment. Inner Light is a vaguer term than the others but it comes nearer the truth when it implies, as it does for some, that the deepest articles of our faith must have the

assent of the whole person. Views about God and man and the universe come to us through church, priest, book or our own inquiry and we are willing to accept them as true not because of their source but because our whole being responds to them and convinces us of their truth. These ideas are not opposed to reason, they do not conflict with our own experience, but, more positively than that, we receive an inward assurance which is compelling that these ideas can be believed. That does not mean that our personal inward authority is always reliable—our persons are complicated and variable beings—and so if we choose this authority above all others we must rest in it humbly, and be careful not to make our conviction the rule for others. In this generation, however, there are some indications that Unitarians are becoming less convinced about the inwardness of their authority or, to put it the other way, more ready to accept some help from external authority. The regular pleas for statements of our faith suggest that there are some people now who believe that the Inner Light can illuminate the thoughts of a group of thinkers and produce theological statements which can be accepted because they are the convictions of a representative group of experts. It may be argued that in the last analysis the last authority is still inward and personal because individual Unitarians will accept or reject such statements individually; but that does not really deny the fact that there is a growing respect for an external authority. A better argument might be that those who seek their theology from others “ready-wrapped” have grown out of the Unitarian position and are returning to a form of authoritarian religion where authority lies in church or priest or book. Whatever the explanation the trend is growing and will become too large to ignore within our own time. To sum up this matter of authority; for the Unitarian it lies within himself and it can be a very effective authority provided he remembers that it works within the context of his own varying experience and personality and finds expression in the ready-to-hand language and symbols of his Christian environment. Its weakness is its isolation and our generation of Unitarians at least must create or re-create the techniques of discussion and active inquiry (as opposed to passive assent) which can do much to offset the weakness.

Theology has to do with man and God and the relations between them (and with the universe as a less intimate concern) and since men act together towards God there is a “framework of practice” about which theology must say something and which at the same time colours our theological thinking and the authority upon which our thinking rests. This framework has three parts; an organisational state which we will call “the church,” an activity which is worship, and a social situation, sometimes real, sometimes ideal, which contains the other two, usually called the Kingdom of God. Unitarians customarily think of themselves as lacking an adequate theory of the church, but in some ways the lack is inevitable.

Where the stress is laid upon individual seeking and finding and personal communion with the Divine it is not easy to fashion and hold fast to some theory of a visible and invisible community of faithful souls, or to find sufficient reasons for the existence of such a community. Our traditional insistence upon veracity runs against the strong sense of continuity of those who believe that the church was divinely established and has since been divinely guided by the Holy Spirit as the principal agency of God's revelation in our world. Again, the theory of the church as the body of Christ falls short for some in a movement which allows the possibility of truth in non-Christian religions. This position is responsible for the idea of "one grand all-comprehending church" associated particularly with the name of Channing. It is a fine concept, probably acceptable to all Unitarians but it really says more about the nature of God than the nature of the church and it is not easily related to the visible earthly church of which our own particular congregation is an all-too-real part. Perhaps it is this gulf between the universal family of God and the "club" of imperfect believers making up our own congregation which makes us seem to lack a theory of the church. But if we start at the visible and human end to make such a theory, what we find is that our first lack is a theory, of the congregation. Our forbears established churches almost by accident—they did not at first expect to continue long as separate congregations—and we have never clearly formulated the nature of a congregation which is "gathered" not by common beliefs but by a common will to seek. If we start from this description of the congregation we can see quite clearly that the church is, to quote Channing again, "a help" rather than an authority, a very human instrument rather than a divine agency. If we believe that God has ordained that all men be seekers of him we can extend this view of the church to cover all Christian churches and the faiths beyond that and we can go on to make a concept of God's community of seeking souls rather than believing souls. We do need to have a clear and exalted idea of the church to temper our individualism and to make our inward seat of authority increasingly reliable.

Our lack of such a theory of the church or the congregation is sometimes reflected in the inadequacy of our worship. We are quick to turn worship to our own ends, to regard it as an aid to our own pursuit of truth rather than as a mutual human activity directed towards God. It is an act of recognition of the highest, however we conceive it, a giving of ourselves to something higher than ourselves, and when it is public worship it should engender some sense of human fellowship out of the awareness of a common relationship or attitude to the divine. It is a seeking and a learning as well, but ideally it is a giving before it can be a receiving. We have special problems of language and symbolism in public worship because of the wide variety of beliefs and of spiritual needs among our worshippers and I do not think we have fully faced them yet.

The current discussions in some circles about the possibility of theists and humanists worshipping together thrusts the problem before us, but in too acute a form to lead to fruitful results. We do need to affirm that worship is central to personal religion and church life but we cannot do that with any hope of being believed until we can show that we are seeking ways of worship which will truly express our aspirations and bring us back some renewed sense of the reality of that which we worship. Incidentally, in this matter our inward authority alone is plainly insufficient. Because a particular kind of worship is true (in the widest sense) for *me* I cannot infer that it is true for any other.

The traditional phrase "the kingdom of God" embodies our belief that our faith is something to be lived out in this world but we do not always achieve the right balance between worship and work, the mount and the plain. When we conceive the kingdom as a social Utopia we find so much work at hand towards its realization that we forget that it is God's kingdom and work as it is our own—seldom stopping to consider what His will is or to remember that His earthly kingdom is not likely to be national or regional but covering the whole wide world. Some of us would also want to suggest that it is a kingdom of all his creatures, not just the human kind. Sometimes we see the whole goal of religion as "bringing in the Kingdom"—making a social revolution which will bring material and even mental contentment to all men, but we do not always notice at the same time how vast an aim that is and how much divinity will be needed in our frail humanity to bring it about. Which brings us to another view of the kingdom, that it is already realized or to be realized in human hearts. Something like this is meant by the more modern statement that the goal of religion is the full development of personality in the individual. The language of the kingdom is more accurate because it expresses something of the overlapping and inter-relations of individual lives and personalities which psychologists are inclined to pass over in their enthusiasm for individual "wholeness." Social psychology is reminding us more and more that "no man is an island" but asking us to consider this at the level of personal relationships and influences rather than the level of the supply and demand of bread and butter. We need a theory of the kingdom which defines social and personal goals clearly in the light of the Divine Purpose so far as we can discern it.

It is in this framework of practice—our actual situation as worshipping members of a church with a concern for social and individual progress in this world—that we must work out our theology. It is a complicated situation because most of its emphasis is upon "community" while the cornerstone of our theological method is individuality but we cannot turn away from the situation on that account or we will produce a theology which has no relevance for our time or our fellow-men.

I have already made the point that our individual role is not to make up a set of theological ideas out of nothing but to consider and make judgments about theological material which is presented to us. So we come to a brief consideration of the materials of our faith which I would divide into four items: the Bible, the Sacraments, Christian doctrines, and the teachings and practices of other (i.e. non-Christian) faiths. There are various possible attitudes one may adopt towards the Bible once one has shaken off the idea that it is the very word of God from cover to cover, all divinely inspired and making up a coherent and complete revelation of the will of God for men. That is the view which makes the Bible the supreme authority in matters of belief and we have rejected it for an inward authority. We may look at the Bible and say, "It is part of our heritage, therefore we must use it," and try to make our faith accord with its teachings and capable of expression in its language. But this is to accord it too much authority over us. Or we may use it as a textbook on the history of religion in one particular race. This is to undervalue it. Or again, with our awareness of how much religion is a matter between individuals and God, we may see it as a book written by men who knew God in their own experience and use it as a reference book to help us to refine our understanding of our own sense of God as revealed in our own experience. For those of us who have grown up in the Christian faith it will probably prove more valuable for this purpose than any other book because its language will accord closely with the instinctive language of our thoughts; but in our generation we have to recognize that other books may prove more helpful to those who have grown up without it. In this connection we might find that many of those who have grown up in Unitarian churches have a very poor knowledge of the Bible but have not found any single substitute for it as a guide to faith.

I want to make only passing reference to Sacraments as a part of the material of our faith. Individually and as a movement we are not clear about our rejection of the traditional sacraments. There is room for a reconsideration of the whole matter beginning not from the practice and teaching of orthodox Christianity but from the fact of those human needs in church life and social and family life which are not fully met by reasonable arguments and ways of worship which depend so much upon the spoken word. We need some continual reminder that our theology must allow a place for some mysteriousness in the man-God relationship, for we cannot reduce it all to an explanation or a formula.

Christian doctrines are the staple fare of most Unitarian theologies. We are a parasitic movement in that we "live off" traditional Christianity in large measure, particularly in matters of doctrine. We may regard traditional doctrines as so untrue as to be a challenge and try to devise new equivalents for them in our own theology. Or we may regard them as partially true and use

our freedom to amend them to make a doctrine that seems true to us. Or we may study the doctrine and conclude that it owes its life to some other doctrine which we have already rejected and therefore dispense with it also in our own theology. Or we may see the problem which the doctrine seeks to answer as now the proper concern of, say, science, rather than theology and therefore pass it over in our own formulations. All this relates to particular doctrines. In the total field of dogmatic theology we Unitarians still tend to follow the pattern set by orthodox Christianity but as that orthodoxy comes to command less and less attention we may have to consider whether our own theology might not prove more communicable if set in some other mould. *A Free Religious Faith** did in fact go part of the way in this.

Finally, for the raw material of his faith the Unitarian can call upon such knowledge of the teachings and practices of other religions as he can acquire. It is notoriously difficult to understand fully a faith not one's own but nevertheless the study is most illuminating for those who undertake it, even when it stops short of a full understanding. Human problems are much the same everywhere but the answers vary a great deal and some unfamiliar idea can frequently revivify the phrase which has become dull from over-use. The Christian idea of a single unique Incarnation is a notorious Unitarian stumbling-block but we would not all react so violently if our minds also held the idea of some other faiths that God incarnates himself in the world in human form from time to time as the world has need of his presence. Space does not allow of a detailed argument but, just as we have learnt to enlist the aid of science and psychology and anthropology to illuminate and correct our theological thinking, we could very fruitfully study the great thoughts and the great lives of all the great world religions to enlarge our knowledge both of man and of God.

From these various sources then, as a seeker in fellowship with other seekers, the individual Unitarian can gather the raw material for making answers to theological questions which his own inner authority tells him are true. If he is a very mortal Unitarian, once he has acquired some answers he will cling to them resolutely and defend them dogmatically as if they had come to him with the authority of an infallible pope. If his faith makes him a good Unitarian he will be wholehearted about his conclusions as they come to him and treat them as a firm basis for action in the world, but he will be ever alert to discover his errors or inadequacies and amend his views accordingly.

The last step towards a Unitarian theology, short of stating the very theology itself in full, is to decide what it should contain and give an outline of those contents—a possible Unitarian theology, as was said in the introduction.

We should begin with man because we have some certain

* Lindsey Press, London 1945

knowledge of him. We must note what the various kinds of science tell us about him and what religious teachings tell us, and we should take into account our own first-hand knowledge of the subject. If we note what science can *not* tell us and set it side by side with religious teachings and experiences, we may conclude that man is a citizen of two worlds, one visible and one invisible, which intersect or co-exist in him during this life we know; and we may find enough evidence to encourage us to believe that the invisible life is the greater of the two and in every way larger than this mortal life. We will note a tension in man, a conflict of good and evil, and want to find a satisfactory explanation of the cause and meaning of this.

When we turn to God we will have to depend upon what many men have told us about Him and at the outset we will have to find ways of measuring these statements. Our judgments in this will be coloured by our own religious environment and personal experience and whatever idea of God we set down, we will have to recognize it as partial and in some sense incorrect. At the very least I will want to say that God is spirit, by which I mean invisible to the eye and not subject to our limiting conditions of time and space; that he is active in the world as a "felt presence", a source of moral power and wisdom; that he commands allegiance in some mysterious but unmistakable way and that as far as we can tell he is the same yesterday today and for ever.

How do God and man meet? God reveals himself to those who have "willed to see" and sometimes he seems to reveal himself to those who would rather not see him, though in these cases it may be that acknowledging his existence by fleeing is the same as "willing to see." We may say briefly that man and God both help to bring the meeting about. But God is not only discovered in this direct personal way; he is also to be discovered in the words and deeds of others, to such a very large degree in some few men that their contemporaries and even subsequent followers have thought that each of these men was God Himself in the form of a man. Here we have to consider the idea of Incarnation and distinguish it from the idea of Immanence; both implying God's presence in the world of men but the former making him active in "coming into" while the latter idea makes him passive in "being in" the world. But the cardinal point is that man and God do meet and all the detail of of religion flows from that.

If they meet, do man and God communicate? Here more people would agree that God "speaks" to man than would agree that a man can speak to God in such a way that God hears. God certainly makes his will known to men but their understanding is imperfect so that it is only partially comprehended. The channel of this communication is through the mind of man. It is a difficult question, but more difficult still are the problems centred around prayer—man's communication with God. I cannot be content with the view that it is good for men to pray whether God hears them or not;

most people who pray have in mind more than that and any full Unitarian theology needs to go fully into this subject.

Those four subjects, Man, God, their meeting, their communication, I take to be the foundations of theology. From those subjects spring many questions of varying degrees of importance and some of them must certainly be dealt with in a fully worked out theology. If our view of God makes the existence of evil a problem some answer must be given. Similarly if our view of God is that he is perfect Love, the suffering of living things demands an explanation. If our view of man makes him a citizen of two worlds we must answer questions as to his ultimate destiny and his present purpose, or at least try to find answers. I pass over these traditional subjects for a matter which receives less attention in most theologies but which is regarded with growing interest in our time. This is the matter of the language we use in theology and in worship. We, who depend so much upon words, have a natural interest in the problem but in the past we have produced some very barren results from our passion for veracity. We should always aim to use language accurately in reference to religion but that does not mean that every aspect of religion can be stated accurately or that only one kind of language is permissible. The language of worship is not the same as the language of debate; and when the matter of debate is seen to stretch beyond all plain use of words we should not despise paradox or poetry if they can capture *some* of the meaning beyond our ordinary grasp. A real stumbling block today is our use of a style of language for worship which belongs to an earlier age. We ask men of the twentieth century to pray in nineteenth-century cadences and in rhetorical devices which go even further back. It is not a matter of throwing out all old language but of distinguishing between the parts which are timeless and endlessly evocative and the parts which are stilted and empty on modern lips. A kindred problem is our use of words which have become empty of meaning for many people—even regular worshippers. "Sin," "grace," "reconciliation," "righteousness" have to be refilled with meaning or that meaning restated in the language of this age. And as words lose their meanings so do symbols. We do not have many symbols and it is doubtful if we have any one now which is a living symbol for all Unitarians. We cannot sit down and decide what new symbols to create or what old symbol to renew but we need to understand the place of symbolism in religion and the way in which symbols come into being and this belongs to the secondary level of theology—the level of problems which arise out of man's meeting with God.

Two other issues belong to the same level and are of special concern for Unitarians. One is finding a convincing answer to the view which stems from psychology that all man's ideas of God are subjective. This seems to me one of the most potent causes of loss of faith among those who apply their minds to the working out of their faith. Men are persuaded that God is no objective reality

but something they or other men have "made up" and the doubt once discovered is hard to escape. There is a convincing answer, I suggest, in the peculiar character of men's personal experience of God from time immemorial down to the present, and in realizing the limits of psychological knowledge which are often disguised by the dogmatic way the psychologist voices his general conclusions. The other issue is related to this; it is the so-called "scandal of peculiarity." For the Christian who will point to Jesus Christ and say "There and there only is God for you to see" is quicker to answer subjective doubts than the Unitarian who rejects that view of Christ. But we have been too quick to assume that we know how God works in rejecting the possibility that he did reveal himself through one race and ultimately one person with the intention that by that channel the knowledge of him would cover the earth. We might find it fruitful to consider this particular challenge more thoroughly and particularly to consider what alternatives, if any, are more satisfying to our reason.

Those seem to me to be the principal matters which should find expression in a Unitarian theology today and it would seem to extend the province of theology unduly to add to them. But there are several other questions which call for consideration and some comment in this generation, and they might form appendices to a Unitarian theology. Some of them are matters of general religious interest; others are peculiar to the Unitarian situation. There is space here to do little more than list them.

Mental illness is a growing feature of our way of life and more and more people are coming up against the problem that the mentally sick person seems cut off by his illness from all the comfort of religion, even from God himself. We have to face this.

Religious education is passing into the hands of the state education system, and liberal religious leaders need to consider more thoroughly than they have done so far what the role of our churches should be towards our own children and to children generally. Can we compete? Are we to correct error as it is taught? Do we abandon children to the general system until they have left school and hope that they are then only in error and not indifference as regards religion?

Humanism is a growing challenge to the traditional theism of our churches. Is it a real challenge or a passing dissatisfaction? Has our liberal faith in fact grown conservative and dogmatic and therefore irrelevant in a scientific age?

I detect a growing interest in the traditional healing ministry of the Christian church both among church people and some members of the medical profession. We should be careful not to reject the whole matter out of hand in an excess of reasonableness. If we can learn from our past experience we will examine the matter thoroughly and with some imagination.

Whether our special concern is humanity in general or a

particular part of society, we should give some consideration to the prevalence in our time of second-generation faithlessness; i.e. the presence of a generation who are outside churches and organized religion not because they have rejected it but because they have never met it as a result of their parents' turning aside a generation earlier. We are inclined to make assumptions about people sharing a general minimum of religious knowledge which are no longer true for the whole community.

Ordinary life is characterised by an ever-increasing burden of information from press, radio, television and advertising. If the church contributes to this flood it has to find specially effective ways of conveying that it stands for something above the flood.

Above all, the problem in our time is one of communication—how to transmit God's Word accurately and meaningfully to those who have ears to hear but no understanding of the language of religion.

Bruce Findlow, a graduate of Sydney, trained for the Ministry at Manchester College Oxford, is now Minister of St. Mark's (Unitarian) Church, Edinburgh.

Religion and Neurosis

H. FABER, D.D.

NEUROSIS has become one of the most important problems of our Western culture. Psycho-analysis, which finds its working field here, has gone through a great development since Freud. In many fields we meet psycho-analytic points of view, in education, social work and criminology, to name only a few.

From the beginning there was also a relation to religion and the church, though, on the whole, a difficult one. Freud had rather a negative opinion of religion, although in his correspondence with the Swiss minister, Pfister, he also voiced some other ideas. Jung on the other hand estimated the phenomenon of religion in a more positive way. In the last few years a somewhat better relation between psycho-analysis and religion has begun to develop. Besides Pfister, there is, amongst others, Erich Fromm—a European refugee who migrated to America, where the atmosphere is anyhow less prejudiced—whose writings are a symptom of this new orientation.

An important field to which psycho-analysis has contributed is that of psychosomatic medicine. Its object is to investigate the influence of psychical factors as the cause of such somatic illnesses as asthma, gastric ulcers, heart diseases, arthritis, etc. In reality it is a research into the influence of neurosis on physical functions.

For some years I had the privilege of taking part as a theologian in the discussions of a group of medical men who did systematic research in this field, with the aid of the Rockefeller Foundation. This led to the publication of a book entitled *On being ill* in which I recorded the results of my investigations—part of this present study is a report of my findings with 28 patients who had been examined and treated by this group. The subject of my research was the influence of the various neuroses from which these people were suffering on their religious development and their religious life. In this article I would like to state some important results of this research.

There are two hypotheses concerning the relation between neurosis and religion. Freud tried to prove that religion is, in reality, a kind of neurosis. To this end he referred to different religious customs which allegedly were the same as the actions of sufferers from compulsion neurosis. The other hypothesis is that unbelief, not belief, is a disturbance in the inner development. In a publication *Character and aptitude in connection with unbelief*, the Dutch psychiatrist, Prof. Dr. H. Rümke (University of Utrecht), defends the hypothesis that faith is one of the natural functions of man and that the absence of faith must be carried back to a disturbance in his emotional development.

Where do we go from here? This was the question I put myself. In the first place we have to define what we mean by neurosis. In a general way one could say it is a disturbance in the development of the human personality. This development consists of going through a number of emotional relations with other people, especially with parents, brothers and sisters. This development can go wrong at various points, with the result that such a person later fails to find a satisfactory relation to reality, that he is not, as we express it, adjusted to reality, and suffers from a so-called neurotic behaviour.

In the clinic where this psychosomatic team worked a large number of neurotic patients were examined and treated. From these patients we selected, in joint consultation, 28, with each of whom I had an interview. There is no room here to enlarge upon these interviews; I can only state that we dealt with 12 questions. A report was made of each interview and two such reports are added to this article as examples.

Before going into the results of this research we have to say a few things:

(1) Among the patients we found two types of belief. First there was what we called the natural belief, which corresponds mainly with the type of religion defended by such a philosopher as Karl Jaspers in his book *Philosophical Belief*. The other was a christian-church type of belief, which, however, showed many variations.

(2) We started with a picture of religious development which we can briefly sum up as follows: we believe that a child at birth

lives out a primitive faith which perhaps could be called the kernel of "natural" religion. This primitive faith is put to the test when the child comes into contact with the reality of life; its wishes are not always satisfied without more ado. In this first period unbelief can already arise in the form of cynicism, fear or aggression. Around his fourth year the child develops, from various sources, a super-ego, which can be of great importance for religious development, because the child, in his ideals, also includes the attitude of his parents with regard to religion. From this research we saw that the formation of ideals in those years is very important. At about the age of eight the primitive faith of the child, which was previously directed to the parents, starts to believe in God, about whom it has already heard and about whom it could at first only form childish concrete notions, but with regard to whom it now starts to entertain early, but real religious feelings. God as the loving and punishing Father now becomes a religious reality to the child. One has to be careful how one speaks about God to the child at this age, because it seems to be difficult for certain children to get rid of fear of the punishing God. During puberty there follows a period in which, through doubts, belief in a Christian or more natural form becomes a personal possession.

(3) In the third place we tried to establish a norm, according to which we could distinguish a normal from an immature belief. We took the view that the "quality" of belief could not be measured by its content but should be measured by the "quality" of the religious experience. We tried to find out whether the patients had reached an attitude of life in which suffering, anxiety, and guilt had been accepted and incorporated in a mature, adult way.

The conclusion to which we came could generally be stated as follows: Neurosis disturbs the normal development of faith. From this we went on to make the following statements:

(1) In most cases we found that the formation of ideals in early youth, especially the ideal of the father-image, was a major influence.

(2) A neurotic relation to the parents can give to the religious development an "unhealthy" direction. A good instance of this is patient 5: his inclination to an orthodox type of faith is reached under the influence of the hatred of his mother who is a liberal.

(3) In the reports on the interviews with "unbelievers" it seems probable that a fixation took place in a very early phase of development. Patient 25 is an instance of this kind. His fear (anxiety) probably is connected with an unsolved Oedipus situation.

(4) There are some instances which indicate a "church-faith". is rejected, but that the original "natural faith" has been preserved.

Concerning the period after the eighth year of age we found that:

(1) Some patients had clearly become fixed in the phase proper to the ages of 8 to 12.

(2) Others did not show the normal puberty problems.

On account of these facts we formulated the following conclusions:

(1) a great majority of these patients show disturbances in their religious development.

(2) In many of them a correlation can be indicated between the religious and the neurotic disturbance.

(3) In many instances there is probably a connection between the two in the sense of an influence of the neurotic disturbance on the religious development.

Here we can ask ourselves: how can we picture this influence? I see two possibilities: First, there is a direct influence of the neurotic disturbance on the religious development (as in patient 5). Secondly, there can be an indirect influence in such a way that on account of the neurotic disturbance the whole personality has remained infantile and that therefore the religious development is abnormal also. It seems to me that the other patient (25) is a striking example of this occurrence.

When we measure the religious life of these patients against the standards indicated above, the following points come to the front:

First, when trying to find out their attitude to the suffering which entered their life with this illness, we found three types of reaction; (i) The patient accepts or assimilates his suffering and in some way or another outgrows it. (ii) He admits the problem of suffering to his inner man without being able to solve it. (iii) He rejects the problem and does not admit it into his inner person.

Amongst these patients we observed that there were eight of them in whose life it could be said that a certain though incomplete digestion of the problem of suffering, had been effected. It was as if they had reached a deeper insight into the character of human life than a digestion of the problem. Six others had admitted the problem to their inner life without being able to find a solution to it. Nine turned away from the problem and did not even admit it to their inner life. In five we found reactions which could not be fitted into this scheme. Therefore the majority of the cases did not come up to the norm.

We also tried to find out whether having a faith, even if it was only an immature one, made a difference in this respect. In two patients, who could be considered as believers, we saw that their faith had been of positive help to them in their problem, whereas the majority of the unbelievers had rejected the problem.

What was their attitude in the face of anxiety?

Here also we find the same symptoms. Only in two patients did we find acceptance and digestion of their anxieties. Six had more or less accepted and digested the problem. Two others had accepted anxiety but had been unable to digest it. And twelve patients headed off the anxiety by running away from it and by shutting themselves off from it. So here too we find that the majority of the cases did not come up to our norms as described above.

The third problem was that of guilt. In how far was this accepted and digested?

In our protocol we had not included a definite question concerning this problem because we feared it would prove to be too complicated. Yet the experience of guilt was sometimes discussed and some patients expressed an opinion about it. There were eight cases from which we could draw conclusions. The most outstanding phenomenon was that the patients who did acknowledge guilt were inclined to minimize and forget it. Only one patient showed that he felt and acknowledged guilt and admitted it to his consciousness and digested it. Curiously, this was one of the "believers."

For the sake of completeness I should add that in meeting and digesting the problem of anxiety, faith had been a positive factor for some patients.

As a result of this research we came to the following general conclusions: The religious life of these neurotic patients in many respects is of a childish or infantile character. Moreover, the group with which this research was conducted was rather small, and a group of "healthy" people should have been tested in order to compare the results and enable us to make a better evaluation.

Herewith we reach a somewhat different conclusion to that of Jung who, some years ago in a lecture for ministers about psychotherapy and spiritual care, declared that neurotic patients above 35 years of age usually had religious difficulties. We see it rather that, in effect, every neurosis is a religious problem. To be neurotic means to be unable to believe in an adult way, or often even to believe at all, because in infancy one has been deprived of one's original trust and so has become stuck in anxiety, aggressiveness or despondency. To be neurotic means that one has been unable to solve in an adequate way the problems of reality, whereas, to have faith, means that one has confidence in meeting reality with its disappointments, pleasures and struggles.

CASE-HISTORIES

Patient 5

Lawyer, born 1926. Asthma (after becoming a student) in connection with difficulties with a loving but dominating mother. Has had extensive psychotherapeutic treatment.

Patient has had a superficial religious education. His parents were members of the Remonstrant Church, liberal to the limit. He attended Sunday school and religious instruction. Went to a public school and took part in various camps of the Free Christian Youth Movement. For one year he was a member of the orthodox Christian Youth Students' Association. As a student he attended a course of religious instruction and became a member of the church. His marriage was consecrated.

As a child he was not taught a children's prayer, there were no prayers at table and no Bible reading. He seldom went to church.

He had no early religious recollections, only that his grandmother was astonished that he did not know any prayers. When he was 11 years old he refused to go to church with his mother who made a scene about it. He had no recollections of puberty problems.

An important period in his life was during the war when he had to go to Germany and work there, afterwards he went into hiding. In the religious instruction course he had had a "quiet interest." But in Germany he became highly tensed and began to live "essentially." He had discussions with a Dutch labourer's son who was very intelligent and a member of the "Spartacus-group" (a more or less communistic organization). This young man unmasked his "liberal christianity" as not specifically Christian (i.e. not true to the old dogmas, but more akin to Spinoza's thought). These discussions were on an intellectual level and made him see the differences between "religion" and "Christian belief" on the lines of Karl Barth's clear distinction between the two. This made him start thinking for himself. Moreover he met a rather orthodox girl, who further stimulated his thinking, which resulted in a lively correspondence. He was pushed back on the essential points, on the Bible itself, whereas he also felt a longing for the safety of dogmatics.

After this he had to go into hiding in the home of a churchwarden, a member of an ethical-orthodox community where he read many books: Stanley Jones, Wildschut, Miskotte (*Faith by the grace of God*, was especially enlightening to him). His hatred of liberal Christianity was closely connected with his hatred of his mother. He also read Karl Barth and other orthodox religious science books. This was the time when his asthma started. After the war his religious interest more or less dropped away but even so he was confirmed. During his first years as a student there was religious struggle, and at that time his asthma was worst.

He cannot remember definite feelings from his early youth. The greatest influence on his religious development came from a few ministers. In the later period of his puberty he knew anxiety: he was afraid of losing his faith. He never knew the fear of hell or of the devil.

His attitude with regard to religion has changed through psychotherapy. He now thinks of himself as practically indifferent. Much has been destroyed and many useless ideas have been discarded through identification with the psychotherapist.

Asked for his opinion of religion he says: "if it is harmonious it is the rounding off of personality. But I do not use it, for which I am sorry. It is too deeply buried."

He does not connect being ill with religion. Illness is to him a medical-technical problem, with a psychic and a somatic element in it. Asked for his reaction to the certainty of life (illness, death) he said: "I don't know, formerly perhaps, but at present I am living in a very unreligious period." During his asthmatic attacks he had no confidence, otherwise it would probably have disappeared.

He is fiercely anti-clerical, but he does respect R.C. people. A Muslim has the same rights. Eventually he would leave his children free in the choice of their marriage-partner.

As his own contribution to the interview he said: "After analysis you keep a feeling of resentment against the psychotherapist on account of what you have lost. However, I also gained something."

Patient 25

Born 1906, coronary thrombosis, house-painter, second child in a family of six. In case of strong inner tension about which he cannot say much, he gets a heart-attack.

Has had no religious education; his father, originally a member of the reformed church, married a R.C. wife out of spite, but none of them cared about their religion. Of the six children, three were baptised in the reformed church, the other three were not baptised. He did not go to Sunday school or to religious instruction classes, and did not go to confirmation. He attended a public school (in which in Holland no religious instruction was given in his youth). Religious customs (prayer, going to church, etc.) never played a role in his life. However, he has nothing against such practices, two of his children attend Sunday school, one has been baptised.

He has no characteristic religious memories. His father was fiercely opposed to Catholicism, probably on account of confession. His parents were decent people. For a long time he had a friend who was a R.C. but they never talked about religion.

He has not been in military service and never worked for a strange boss, so that, after leaving home, he never came under foreign influence. His wife was baptised in the Dutch Reformed Church but is not interested in her religion. He never talked about it with her. He has no memory of religious feelings and never had "experiences" in the field of religion. Elder people have not had any religious influence on him. He was the apple of his mother's eye but his father kept him on a short leash. "I have never been understood." Apparently this concerns more his later life than his youth. When he entered the firm there were often bickerings. He never liked dogs or cats but he did like little birds and he thinks his job has a certain influence there. He cannot remember ever going to bed with a plush bear or anything like that.

He has never heard about hell, nor about a revengeful God. There are no persons or influences which have determined his attitude with regard to religion, neither in a positive nor in a negative sense. He has never had any contacts with the clergy. When he went to have his first child baptised he was told that he had "a black heart" because he had not been baptised himself. He has not said anything but he resented this very much and "never went again," except when his other children were baptised.

Asked for his opinion about the meaning of religion he says that for those who are educated in it, it certainly will mean something (thinking of his R.C. friend) but he himself has never bothered about it and is outside it.

When he fell ill he has only asked: "Where did that come from?" When he fell from that ladder he was not afraid, but later when he had a heart attack he was afraid of dying "because his children were still so very small."

He has no solution for the problem of life's uncertainty: "I have always been afraid." He considers himself to be a man without religion, a heathen. He means here religion in the sense of belonging to a church, he has no awareness of a "natural religion." In hospital he sometimes went to the church services with the other patients but it did not mean anything to him, though he saw it did do something to the other patients.

Asked about tolerance he says he is quite ready to allow other people their own convictions; he would accept a R.C. daughter-in-law. "You cannot do much against it; we have not been educated this way, so perhaps it is easier for us."

His own contribution to the interview is that one of his brothers has recently become a Roman Catholic (probably under the influence of his former in-laws) and another brother he suspects of being Dutch Reformed. The latter had said to him: "We need something" but he does not understand that. They are older than he is, perhaps as he gets older himself. . . .

Dr. H. Faber is the Senior Secretary of the International Association for Religious Freedom at Leyden, Holland.